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THE ASPIRATE

BY THE REV. GEOFFRY HILL



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THE ASPIRATE

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THE ASPIRATE

OR

THE USE OF THE LETTER "H"
IN ENGLISH, LATIN, GREEK
AND GAELIC

BY THE

REV. GEOFFRY HILL

VICAR OF EAST WITH WEST HARNHAM;
AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH DIOCESES"

London

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PREFACE

ON informing a friend whose opinion was to be relied on that I intended to write something upon the Aspirate, I was strongly advised not to let my remarks appear in print until I knew what German scholars had to say on the subject. Accordingly I attempted to consult Eduard Sievers' *Grundzüge der Phonetik*, but was told that it was out of print. Not knowing when a new edition would be issued, I decided not to wait for it: it has, however, now been published,¹ and I have been enabled, through the kindness of Mr. Capel Pownall, to make use of it. I find that the method of forming the 'h' in the throat is fully discussed, a

¹ Leipzig, 1901.

subject which I have not treated, since, if I had, I should have treated it badly, but that nothing is said upon the improper dropping or the equally improper addition of h's, nor upon the use to which the letter is sometimes put in grammar and in the expression of a person's feelings. The reason, Mr. Pownall tells me, is simple, because the Germans never drop or add h's for any reason or under any pretext, though it must be stated that they are sometimes mute in the middle of a word in order to show that a syllable is long.¹ I must, therefore, qualify my statement made on p. 39 that in 1880 the German Government abolished certain h's as unnecessary: I now find that what was actually done was this—the Prussian Minister of Instruction abolished the 'h' in those words beginning with 'th' in which the 'h' had been mute.

My thanks are due and are here given

¹ "‘H’ is always aspirated except when it follows a vowel in the same syllable where it only serves to signify the protraction of the vowel. *St* and *sp* are as soft as in English. It would be a fault to pronounce these after the Swiss manner, namely, *scht* and *schp*" (Kaltschmidt's *German Dict.*).

to the Right Rev. the Bishop of Edinburgh ; Dr. Law of the Signet Library, Edinburgh ; the Rev. Dr. Keating, Chancellor of S. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh ; the Rev. Dr. Bourne, Canon and Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral ; the Rev. H. Carpenter, Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral ; Colonel Cox ; Mr. D. de Castro ; Mr. A. R. Malden ; and Mr. G. E. Dartnell, either for the stories with which they have supplied me for the illustration of my points, or for the advice which they have given me as to books of reference. Nor must I omit to thank Professor Mackinnon for the amount of knowledge of Gaelic Grammar acquired at his Lectures.

GEOFFRY HILL.


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THE ASPIRATE

IT has been debated whether 'h' is a letter of the alphabet or only a breathing: ¹ the proper sound of the symbol has also been a subject of difference among scholars, some attributing to it a guttural sound similar to that of the German 'ch,' others giving it the sound which belongs to it at the present time in English. In reality the two questions are but one; for the German 'ch' is without any doubt a letter, while the modern English 'h' is nothing more than a breathing. It seems to be generally admitted that originally the letter was a strong

¹ " 'H' sitne litera an aspirationis nota inter grammaticos controversum est " (Forcellini's *Lat. Lexicon* under 'De litera H.') " Per aspirationem, sive adjicitur vitiose sive detrahitur, apud nos potest quæri an in scripto sit vitium, si H litera sit, non nota " (Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.* i. 5).

guttural,¹ and that in the Semitic tongues it retained this character; but it could only have been a breathing in Greek;² for otherwise there would have been no place for χ . In some languages—for example, in Latin and in English—the value of the letter is a debateable point. In the old English tongue it was, according to Professor Earle, more than an aspirate: it was a guttural, the force of which was that of the present German or of the Welsh ‘ch.’³ In the time of Bede its place was taken among the Angles as distinguished from the Saxons by ‘c’; thus,

¹ “‘H is derived from the Phœnician letter *cheth* which was obtained from the Egyptian hieroglyphic symbol which goes by the name of ‘the sieve.’ The Semitic name, which means a fence or palisade, is explained by the form of the letter , which resembles a three-barred stile. The sound was that of a strongly marked continuous guttural, produced at the back of the palate, which does not exist in English, but is heard in the Scotch *loch* and the German *lachen*” (*Chambers’s Encyclopædia*, new edition, 1895, under ‘H’). See also the *Encyclopædia Britannica* under ‘H.’

² “In Greece it represented nothing more than the spirant ‘H’” (*Encycl. Brit.* under ‘H’). For the manner in which ‘h’ became in Greek the long ‘e’ and in Latin retained its sense of aspiration, see *Encyclopædia Britannica* and *Chambers’s Encycl.* under ‘H.’

³ See Earle’s *Philology of the English Tongue*, 5th ed., p. 133.

King Egbert was 'Egberht' in the south of England, 'Egberct' in the north. But we also come across the form 'Egbercht.' This arises from the fact that as time went on the guttural value of 'h' was not so evident; and so it was in this and in other cases transformed into 'ch' in order that the propriety of the sound should not be lost¹ (thus 'liht' became 'licht' in Lowland Scotch) or into 'gh' (thus 'dohter' became 'daughter' and 'liht' became 'light' in English). But the attempt to retain the guttural was made in vain; for neither in 'light' nor in 'daughter' nor in any similar word has the guttural been sounded in the King's English for some centuries, although it is still heard in Lowland Scotch and in the tongue of the northern English—for example, in the forms 'licht' and 'dochter.'²

The letter 'h' occupies a more important place in English³ than in any other Aryan tongue. This partly arises from the fact

¹ Earle's *Philology*, p. 134. 'Berkhampstead' is spelt 'Beorhhamstede' in the *Saxon Chronicle* (Rolls Series, i.) under the year 1066. Thus 'k,' which is equivalent to 'c,' is interchangeable with 'h.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³ For an example of the frequency of the 'h' in Old English see the *Saxon Chronicle* (Rolls Series, i. p. 220),

that words beginning with this letter are more numerous in English than in the sister languages ; for, as Grimm's law tells us, the original 'k' or hard 'c' which the Latins retain resolves itself into 'h' in English and other Teutonic tongues ; thus, 'celo' becomes 'I heal,' 'carpo' 'I harvest' ; 'cor' becomes 'heart,' 'caput' 'head,' 'centum' 'hundred' and 'cornu' 'horn.' There is

where we read "hu hi hit freodon," or, as we should now say, "how they freed it."

Other Aryan languages besides the English affect the 'h' ; the Welsh use 'h' where the Gaels use 's' ; here Latin agrees with Gaelic and Greek with Welsh ; thus "the sun is *saul* in Gaelic, *heol* in Welsh, *svar* in Sanskrit, *hware* in Zend, *sol* in Latin, *ἥλιος* in Greek" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 38, London, 1863).

"A distinguishing peculiarity of the Gaelic is its use of the sibilant in cases where the Welsh dialects use the aspirate. Instead of the Welsh *halen* salt, *haf* summer, *hen* old, *hesg* sedge, *hi* she, *hin* weather, *hil* offspring, *hir* long, we have in the Irish *sailin*, *samh*, *sean*, *seisg*, *si*, *sion*, *siol*, *sior*. . . . Critics seem pretty well agreed that *esox* is the Cornish word *ehoc* and the Breton and Welsh word *eog*, a salmon" (*Origines Celt.*, i. p. 381, London, 1883).

'Hen,' the Welsh for 'old,' is 'sean' in Gaelic and 'senex' in Latin. 'Ten' does not resemble 'decem' and *δέκα* ; but they are all the same word, as the Mæso-Gothic 'tihun' proves (see Latham's *English Language*, ii. p. 214, London, 1855).

"'S' in Greek usually passes into the *spiritus asper*

also another and more weighty reason; the modern English have given a fictitious importance to the letter by making the correct use of it a mark by which refined and educated people may be differentiated from those that are not.¹ It would be interesting to ascertain the period in English literature when it was first considered the mark of an uneducated man to drop an 'h.' It is certain

at the beginning of a word, as we see from many familiar examples where the analogy of other languages shows that the word once began with σ " (Papillon's *Comparative Philology*, p. 62, London, 1876). Thus ἔδος is 'sedes,' ἑπτα 'septem,' ἔπομαι 'sequor,' ὄς 'suus,' ὕς sus; but there is also the form σύς.

In the middle of words between two vowels σ is frequently omitted; thus τύπτεσαι becomes τύπτται and in Attic τυπτη. This is common in Doric; thus μῶσα, the Doric for μοῦσα, becomes μῶα; and in some inscriptions we find its place supplied by the rough breathing, as ἐποίη ἐ for ἐποίησε (see Jelf's *Greek Gram.*, i. p. 8, Oxford, 1851). "Ι-στη-μι stands for σι-στη-μι; compare the Latin si-sto (see Curtius' *Greek Gram.*, p. 21, London, 1864).

¹ "It is certain that if English had been left to itself the sound 'h' would have been as completely lost in the standard language as in most of the dialects. . . . The result was to produce a purely artificial reaction against the natural tendency to drop the 'h,' its retention being now considered an almost infallible test of education and refinement" (Swete's *Handbook of Phonetics*, p. 194).

that a few hundred years ago Englishmen of good position thought it no disgrace to do so. It is equally certain that in these days no Englishman can feel his position assured who does not use his aspirates properly ; he is at the mercy of his associates, and this is not a point in which they are inclined to show mercy. But who cast the first slur on such a man? In what book do we first meet with the notion that the aspirate defines for a man his social standing? As far as we know, the subject has not yet been investigated. In favour of the disappearance of the 'h' has been that French influence which since the Norman Conquest has been so powerful in England.¹ Against this influence is the influence of printing, which tends to keep orthography stationary.² But above all other influences is that of fashion.

¹ "The modern Greeks, the Italians, the Spaniards and the Portuguese have lost the sound altogether, though they still retain 'h' in their orthography. It is scarcely heard in French, except in very emphatic utterance, and some orthoepists deny that it is used at all. The present tendency of all the European languages is to its absolute suppression ; and it is not impossible that it may vanish from even our orthoepy as completely as it has done from that of the South of Europe" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 352).

² "Were it not for the influence of printing the rough

There are other marks which are helpful in distinguishing persons ; thus, a man is not supposed to drop the 'g' at the end of the present participle active, although at the present time there is a small section of the well-to-do classes who do so ; but none are so unfailing as the proper use of the 'h.' It is true that charitably disposed persons will excuse a man for dropping an 'h,' if he is well off, or if, being of some age and rather old-fashioned, he retains the pronunciation that was prevalent two generations ago of such words as 'hospital' and 'humble' ; but the rule is a fixed one, universally recognised among the educated and generally acquiesced in, even by those who suffer from it, that h's must not be dropped in society. The slurring of h's, when it arises from quick or careless speech, is condoned to a certain extent, if the speaker is socially well placed, but the deliberate, cold-blooded omission of an 'h' is abhorrent to educated ears, and the possession of a very large income is required to ensure forgiveness. It must, however, be admitted that the 'h' that follows a 'w' is

breathing of the 'h' would probably long before this have ceased to be heard in English" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 478).

often not pronounced even by the educated classes, especially in the South of England; in those parts 'which,' 'what,' and 'white' are not infrequently 'wich,' 'wot,' and 'wite.'¹ The practice of dropping an 'h' in such words seems to have considerable antiquity; for 'wile' is used for 'hwile' or 'while' in the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 1140 and thrice under 1137.² The Dutch, too,

¹ " *Wh* has in most parts of England so degenerated as not to be distinguished from *w*, and the pairs *when wen*, *whale wale*, *while wile* are pronounced in the South exactly alike, *teste* the Dean of Canterbury's Queen's English" (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 118). This was written in 1873; we think that things are better in 1900.

"The combination of 'h' and 'w' or 'h' and 'v' occurs in the Scandinavian languages. In some of the Scandinavian local dialects the 'h' is still sounded before 'v,' in others it is no longer heard, the influence of the Romance languages having there, as it has in a much more marked way in England, tended to bring about the suppression of the aspiration" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 352).

There exists a Saxon manuscript in which the combination 'ch' becomes 'hc' in such words as 'chorus,' which is written 'hcorus' (see Dunstan's *Memorials*, pref., pp. xxxix, xl).

² "Saxon words beginning with *hw* are in the *Ormulum*, in Layamon and sometimes even in older Saxon writers spelt with *wh*; and this derangement of the letters has been thought to indicate a difference of

of the present day drop the 'h' in a similar case; thus, we find "Waar is mijn dochter?" in Ahn's *Dutch Grammar*.¹ Again, 'which' is spelt 'wich' in a letter of Robert Aske, the leader of the Rising in favour of the Northern monasteries in Henry VIII's reign.² People are now endeavouring to break themselves of this habit, perhaps influenced by their intercourse with Scotch people, who have never lost the 'h' in such words. Their endeavours are, however, sometimes ludicrous; for we have heard an Englishman, whose h's would not be very correctly placed, in his determination not to drop an 'h' call the Isle of Wight while conversing with Scotch people 'the Isle of White.' Still, it is not the universal opinion that 'h' is reasserting itself in the case of these words; for we find an American writing "Many of us remember when in *white* and other words of this class, at least in America, the 'h' was always distinctly heard, as it always ought to be. At present it is fast disappearing" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, 2nd ed., London, 1863). In other words, the change of 'h' from the first to the second place has been regarded as the first step in the dropping of it.

¹ P. 2, Kegan Paul, London.

² *English Hist. Review*, April, 1890, p. 331.

pearing from this combination."¹ The same writer remarks, perhaps with truth, that this corruption originated not with the vulgar but in French influence and the affectations of polished society.² Whether it is correct or

¹ *Student's Manual of the English Language*, 2nd. ed., p. 352.

The following passage occurs in Hullah's *The Speaking Voice*, p. 57 (Oxford, 1870): "The natives of some parts of Great Britain still distinguish by a slight guttural sound such words as *which* from *witch*, *whether* from *weather*; but the practice is provincial, and would sit awkwardly on one not 'to the manner born,' who adopted it as a principle."

The accusation of provinciality brought against a custom practised from their youth by all educated Scotsmen and Irishmen and a considerable proportion of educated Englishmen is, to say the least, inaccurate. Equally incorrect, we think, is the statement that those who have not been brought up to sound the 'h' in *which* cannot gracefully acquire the habit.

As a reason for not pronouncing the 'h' in such cases Hullah adds: "The sense of such equivocal words can generally be gathered from the context, provided they be distinctly uttered, on whatever system of utterance." But this is not the question.

² *Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 352. Swete writes as if the retention of this 'h' was to be much desired, but implies that it is yet doubtful: "*Wh* is very generally made into *w* in southern English, but it is well to keep up the distinction on the chance of its being afterwards revived" (*Handbook of Phonetics*, p. 189).

"This process of dropping the 'h' after 'w' appears

not to say that Englishmen are replacing the 'h' in words like *which* and *white*, it is undeniable that their wish to retain the 'h' in what they consider its proper place is very evident. We remember the discomfort

to have commenced at an early period ; for Lord Berners wrote, or at least Pynson printed, *wo* and *who*, *were* and *where*, indifferently, and we may thence infer that the pronunciation had already begun to vacillate. Indeed, we find similar forms in Robert of Gloucester, but these may be dialectic" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 352).

More h's have disappeared in English than many people suppose ; for in early times h's were found in positions which we should regard as strange : "The first step towards the abolition of the 'h' in English consisted in its suppression before the liquids 'l,' 'n' and 'r.' In Anglo-Saxon, *ladder*, *ladle*, *lady*, *laugh*, were all written with the initial 'hl' ; the verb to *neigh*, *neck*, *nut*, with 'hn' ; *ready*, *raven*, *ring*, with 'hr' ; and this was also the orthography of the same words in the Old Northern. What the precise force of 'h' was in this combination is uncertain ; but, as it is now a distinct rough breathing in these words in Icelandic, it probably had the same sound in Saxon" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 352).

In Saxon 'hreose' is 'I rush' ; 'hreas' 'I rushed' ; 'hruron' 'we rushed' ; 'gehroren' 'rushed' (see Latham's *English Language*, ii. p. 261).

The 'h' is still sounded with some words beginning with 'r' in some parts of Wessex ; for example, in Somerset and Wilts ; thus 'rain' and 'rail' are there 'hrain' and 'hrail.'

depicted on the face of a man who, having dropped an 'h,' and being conscious of having done so, desired to repair his error, but yet felt that the sound could not be recalled. To the greeting of an acquaintance he had intended to reply, 'It is very healthy air,' referring to the spot on which they stood; but, as the place was considerably above the level of the sea, and as the approach to it was precipitous, he was out of breath, and, besides, had probably not been well instructed in his boyhood in the right use of h's; and so on his lips *healthy* became *'ealthy*. He knew at once that he had done wrong, and, his first thought was to make amends; the 'h' was therefore in the process of being formed. But his second thought told him that his act could not be undone, and so he suppressed the 'h,' but it was evidently with the greatest difficulty that he succeeded in not saying *'hair*.' This determination not to drop an 'h' sometimes puts Englishmen into a ridiculous position. There is a story extant of a converted poacher who once in reading the passage, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him," placed the aspiration on the word 'heir.' His doing so must have reminded both himself and his hearers of his

former mode of life, and must at the same time have provoked a smile. So important indeed is the question of the use of h's in England, that it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that no marriage should take place between persons whose ideas on this subject do not agree.¹ When a question

¹ The abhorrence of dropping an 'h' is by no means peculiar to Englishmen; the ancient Greeks experienced it, at least sometimes; for in two instances, not being able to retain the 'h' in the middle of a word, they put it on at the beginning; thus, the future of ἔχω is ἔξω. But why is the future aspirated, when the present is not? Because there does not, and cannot, exist such a combination as 'chs.' There being, therefore, no possibility of uniting 'h' with 'cs,' it had to be placed at the beginning of the word. For the same reason τρέφω has as its future θρέψω. This may be an unphilological manner of explaining the addition of the aspirate in the two future tenses; but it seems to be the true one nevertheless. Philologists speak of the principle of Compensation. This is how Curtius (*Student's Greek Grammar*, p. 19, London, 1864), explains the matter: "Some stems beginning with τ change this letter to θ when an aspirate at the end cannot be retained. This happens in the following verbal stems:—

ταφ	Pres.	θάπτω, I bury,	Fut.	θάψω.
τρέφ	„	τρέφω, I nourish,	„	θρέψω.
τρέχ	„	τρέχω, I run,	„	θρέξομαι.
τρυφ	„	θρύπτω, I rub to pieces,	„	θρύψω.
τύφ	„	τύφω, I smoke,	„	θύψω."

In the case of ἔχω Curtius (*Greek Gram.*, p. 202)

about h's arises between husband and wife, forgiveness on either side is most difficult. Our readers may remember that one of the grievances felt by the wife against the husband in the Clitheroe Abduction case was that he accused her of dropping her h's. "On sitting down to dinner," said the lady, according to the *Lancashire Evening Post*, "an incident occurred which affected me greatly, coming as it did so immediately after the marriage. I made some observation to Mr. Jackson, when he suddenly said, 'Where are your h's?' I felt very

writes: "The original stem is $\sigma\epsilon\chi$, from which $\epsilon\chi$ has arisen by weakening σ to the rough breathing. From $\epsilon\chi$ came the future $\xi\zeta\omega$, while in the present stem the rough breathing was changed into the soft breathing because of the aspirate in the following syllable." This principle of Compensation seems to be exemplified in the name of the Isle of Ushant. In Breton it is 'Enez heussa,' which means 'the terrible island.' It is 'Ouesant' in French, 'Ushant' in English. Here the French have dropped the 'h.' The English have not kept it, but while taking it off they have inserted another by way of compensation (see *Temple Bar*, October, 1894, p. 221).

The absurdity sometimes caused by the misuse of the 'h' is well illustrated by the following stories:—

"I was going through one of our cathedrals with a friend. We were in the library, and while there some gentlemen came in and asked for Macaulay's works. The

much incensed, but I said nothing, though I thought it a very strange beginning."

A painful, though only temporary, misunderstanding is said to have once taken place between two persons, one of whom supposed the subject of conversation to be the edge of some wood or plantation, while the other thought that the word which had been uttered was 'hedge.' The misunderstanding arose the more easily as in this case the edge of the wood and the hedge that enclosed it were the same object. A Cambridge man once related to us how disgraced all the men

library is very large and very well arranged. The books are in nests of shelves. The nests are lettered and the shelves are numbered. The verger scratched his head and said with an air of importance, 'Let me see; Macaulay is not in M or N; he is in L.' And he aspirated these letters so forcibly, especially the last one, that my friend and myself could not help smiling, my friend afterwards observing, 'He put Macaulay in a very warm place'" (*The Voice and Public Speaking*, p. 106, Hodder and Stoughton, 1879).

"I well-nigh suffered," said a clergyman once, 'a worse fate than King Charles. The verger in the Chapel Royal, giving me instructions as to when my appearance was to be made, said, 'First I takes the choir to their places, and then, after they are seated, I returns for you, sir, and conducts you to the altar.'"

of his college felt ¹ when, in the hearing of visitors who were being shown over the chapel and were expected to admire both it and everything connected with it, the organist, who unfortunately was an undergraduate, said very loudly to the choir who

¹ These lines would never have been written if there were not a general feeling in England that the question of h's was a vital one in social life :—

'Twas in *h*eaven pronounced, it was muttered in *h*ell,
 And *ec/h*o caught faintly the sound as it fell ;
 On the confines of *earth* 'twas permitted to rest,
 And the dept*h*s of the ocean its presence confess'd.
 'Twill be found in the sp*h*ere, when 'tis riven asunder,
 Be seen in the lig*ht*ning and heard in the th*u*nder.
 'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
 Attends at his birt*h*, and awaits him in deat*h*,
 Presides o'er his *h*appiness, *h*onour, and *h*ealth,
 Is the prop of his *h*ouse and the end of his wealt*h*.
 In the *h*eaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
 But is sure to be lost on his prodigal *h*eir.
 It begins every *h*ope, every wis*h* it must bound,
 With the *h*usbandman toils and with monarc*h*s is crown'd.
 Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,
 But woe to the wretch who expels it from *h*ome.
 In the w*h*ispers of conscience its voice will be found,
 Nor e'en in the w*h*irlwind of passion is drown'd.
 T'will not soften the *h*ear*t* ; and, though deaf to the ear,
 It will make it acutely and instantly *h*ear.
 Yet in *sh*ade let it rest like a delicate flower ;
 Ah, breathe on it softly—it dies in an *h*our.

(By Catherine Fanshawe, *Lyra Elegantiarum*, p. 263,
 Ward, Lock & Co., London, 1891.)

were practising in the chancel, he himself being in the west gallery with the organ, "And now, gentlemen, we will 'ave 'Opkins in He."

The pronunciation of the 'h' in early Latin is proved by its presence in orthography;¹ indeed, the fact that *hamus* and χαμός, *hirundo* and χελιδών, *hiems* and χειμών, *hortus* and χόρος, *hio* and χαίνω, *humi* and χαμαί are the same words,² seems to show

¹ But this is not the opinion of all scholars; or, to put it in another way, some think that in *very* early Latin there were no h's; according to them, new ideas requiring expression, the phonetic organs are driven to new devices. "There was probably a time," writes Papillon, "when the Indo-European peoples had no aspirates at all; and while some dialects never arrived at more than one set of aspirates, others ignored them altogether, or lost them again in course of time" (see *Comparative Philology*, pp. 82, 83).

For the reason for the supposition that early Latin had no aspirates see *Comparative Philology*, p. 83. The Sanskrit for 'anser,' a goose, is 'hansa'; in all Aryan languages except Latin there is either the aspirate or a guttural (*Comparative Philology*, p. 86).

² Jelf is of opinion, not that the Latin aspirate 'h' once had the sound of the Greek χ or 'ch,' but that the Greek χ was once merely a breathing: "Traces of the original spirant power of χ seem to be retained in some Latin words, such as χ(θ)ές, *heri*, Ind. *hyas*; χαμαί, *humi*; χ(θ)αμάλός, *humilis*; χείρ, *hir*; χειμερινός, *hibernus*; whence we may conclude that its power more or less

that the Latin 'h' was in some cases not a breathing but a strong guttural.¹ By the time, however, that the language had reached what is called the early Classical period there was a strong feeling in favour of the abolition of aspirated consonants, although by Cicero's day a reaction had set in. Formerly, he remarks, aspirates were never used except in the case of vowels; and so he, like his forefathers, had always used 'pulcros' for 'pulchros,' 'triumpos' for 'triumphos,' 'Cartaginem' for 'Carthaginem,' but latterly he had conformed to the common practice, though he still thought the old custom correct.² Quintilian, who lived

resembled the aspirate 'h,' and of this there are evident traces in Modern Greek. It afterwards assumed the power of a rough aspirate *ch*, or of the cognate consonant *k*" (*Greek Gram.*, i. p. 6).

¹ "It is possible that 'h' in a very few Latin words when it occurs as a medial sound (e.g., *traho*, *veho*) was a continued guttural. But generally it occurs at the beginning of a word and can hardly have been more than a breathing" (*Encycl. Britann.*, under 'H').

² "Quin ego ipse cum scirem ita majores locutos esse, ut nusquam nisi in vocali aspiratione uterentur, loquebar sic, ut pulcros, Cetegos, triumphos, Cartaginem dicerem; aliquando, idque sero, convitio aurium, cum extorta mihi veritas esset, usum loquendi populo concessi, scientiam mihi reservavi" (Cicero, *Orator*, 48).

about a hundred and fifty years later,¹ is of Cicero's opinion with regard to ancient usage, but by his day even such a form as 'chenturiones' was met with.² In old times aspirates were omitted which could have claimed admittance, but Quintilian's 'nimius usus' pointed to a use of aspirates where there was no place for them. Cicero does not touch upon the omission of h's before vowels; but Quintilian asserts that the ancients, while they never used aspirates before consonants, used them but sparingly even before vowels;³ and he gives *hædus* and *hircus*, pronounced as *ædus* and *ircus*, as instances of this habit. But there was also the tendency to put on an initial 'h' as well as to drop it;⁴ and there was also a third class of words comprising those which were spelt sometimes with and sometimes with-

¹ He is supposed to have died about 118 A.D.

² "Diu servatum ne consonantibus aspiraretur, ut in Græcis et triumphis. Erupit brevi tempore nimius usus, ut choronæ, chenturiones, præchones adhuc quibusdam inscriptionibus maneant" (Quintilian, *Instit.*, i. 5).

³ "Parcissime ea (litera 'h') veteres usi etiam in vocabulis, cum ædos ircosque dicebant" (Quintilian, *Instit.*, i. 5).

⁴ "Per aspirationem, sive adjicitur vitiose sive detrahitur (Quintilian, *Instit.*, i. 5).

out an initial 'h,' whose correct form could not be stated with certainty. Thus, *arena*, sand, which comes from *arere*, to be dry, should not have an 'h'; but we find also the form 'harena';¹ again, the first two syllables of 'haruspex' are from 'hira,' but 'aruspex' is not infrequent. Then there are other words, found sometimes with and sometimes without an 'h,' about which it is difficult to say whether they ought properly to have one or not; thus, we have both 'Hannibal' and 'Annibal,' both 'Hadria' and 'Adria.' We find both 'hordeum' and 'ordeum,' though the former is the correct form if the word is connected with 'horridus' and denotes the roughness of the ears. Both 'alucinator' and 'hallucinator' are met with; but, if the word is related to ἀλύσκω, the 'h' seems out of place. An 'h' is never found at the beginning of 'orior' except in Ennius, who uses it in the

¹ Bede twice in his *Ecclesiastical History* (iii. 25) uses 'harundine' for 'arundine'; but we cannot be surprised; for in 'hreed,' the Saxon for 'reed,' the 'h' was distinctly sounded; he would naturally therefore take the form of the Latin word that had the greater resemblance to the word for it in his own tongue. The old people in southern Wiltshire still sound the 'h' strongly with initial r's—for example, in 'rain' and 'rail.'

sense of encouraging, not of rising; but it should be there, as 'hortor,' ὀρννμι and ὀρμάω prove. 'Onus' is sometimes met with under the form 'honus,' 'hac' sometimes becomes 'ac,' 'herus' is preferable to 'erus'; whether 'hercisco' or 'ercisco' should be used seems doubtful.¹

The desire of avoiding trouble is sufficient to account for the disappearance of the 'h' in places where it ought to exist; but apparently the Latins would not omit an 'h' if by doing so any ambiguity arose; for an editor of Aulus Gellius remarks that in a passage where *incohibilis*, 'unable to be restrained,' occurs, many editors write *incoibilis*, which might signify, if it existed, 'unable to be met,' although all the manuscripts are

¹ In addition to the words mentioned above we have the following instances in old Latin manuscripts of 'h' omitted: 'Ortus, 'umerus, 'ospitari; and in Inscriptions 'eres, 'ic, 'omo, 'oras, 'ujus; and the following instances of 'h' added—*H*abraham, *hab*, *h*odio, *harida*, *have*, *holus*, *honerare*, *hostium*.

Examples of both usages may be seen on almost every page of Wordsworth and White's *Vulgata* from readings of Vulgate manuscripts (600–1200 A.D.)—for example, *hamici* for *amici*, *'abeo* for *habeo*.

The non-elision of the 'h' in 'antehac' is perhaps due to its original form, 'antid-hac' (see Papillon's *Comparative Philology*, p. 18, Oxford, 1876).

careful to retain the 'h.'¹ But why, it may be asked, should an 'h' be prefixed to a word? Aulus Gellius replies that its addition is to be accounted for by the wish to strengthen the sound of a word. This reason seems similar to one of the reasons prevalent in England for the wrongful addition of an 'h,' but in reality there is a distinct difference between them. An Englishman would add an 'h' to a word which generally he would pronounce without one, in order to be emphatic, but he does not wish to be always emphatic; the Romans, according to Aulus Gellius, invariably aspirated certain words² because they always

¹ "Pleræque vett. Editt. legunt 'incoibili.' Sed MSSi sancte servant literam 'h'" (Aulus Gellius, v. 3, Lipsiæ, 1762).

² "H literam sive illum spiritum magis quam literam dici oportet, inserebant eam veteres nostri plerisque vocibus verborum firmandis roborandisque, ut sonus earum esset viridior vegetiorque, atque id videntur fecisse studio et exemplo linguæ Atticæ. Satis enim notum est Atticos ἰχθύν, ἰρόν, multa itidem alia, citra morem gentium Græciæ ceterarum, inspirantis primæ literæ dixisse. Sic lachrymas, sic sepulchrum, sic ahenum, sic vehemens, sic inchoare, sic helluari, sic hallucinari, sic honera, sic honustum dixerunt. In his enim verbis omnibus literæ seu spiritus istius nulla ratio visa est nisi ut firmitas et vigor vocis, quasi quibusdam nervis additis, intenderetur" (Aulus Gellius, ii. 3).

wished to be emphatic with them. Thus, to quote the opinion of Festus, a grammarian of the fourth century, *helluo*, a spendthrift, although derived from *eluo*, received its 'h' that the enormity of being such a person might be the more severely reprobated.¹ In the case of most of the words which he quotes Aulus Gellius may be correct; but his reason for the aspirate in 'vehemens' and 'aheneus' may be questioned; for the alternative form of 've,' from which, together with 'mens,' 'vehemens' is derived, is 'veh,' the 'h' of which can hardly fail to have had a guttural sound; ² while the reason for the 'h' in 'aheneus' would seem to be the wish to separate the vowels 'a' and 'e.' The source from which Aulus Gellius states that the Romans derived their custom of aspirating is noticeable; undue aspiration was, he writes, an Athenian custom, and he mentions

¹ "Heluo dictus est immoderate bona sua consumens, ab eluendo, cui aspiratur, ut aviditas magis exprobetur. Fit enim vox incitator" (see note in Aul. Gell., ii. 3).

² Quintilian, too, (*Instit.*, i. 5), treats 'vehementer' as if 'vementer' were the proper form. He also puts forward 'comprehendo' as a lengthened and aspirated form of 'comprendo,' whereas it is probably derived from 'præ' and 'hend' or 'hand,' a root which is perhaps identical with the English 'hand' (see Smith's *Lat.-Eng. Dict.*, under 'Prendo').

ἰχθύς and ἰερός as words which in Attic Greek, but in no other dialect, possess the initial aspirate.¹ Among the Greeks the Æolians seem to have been the principal discarders of the initial aspirate,² in the place of which

¹ 'Attici pro ἰχώρ ἰχώρ dixerunt' (note to Aul. Gell. ii. 3., Lipsiæ, 1762).

² 'Æoles aspirationem haud agnoscunt, Attici delectantur' (note to Aul. Gell., ii. 3, Lipsiæ, 1762).

"There seems to have been a tendency in Greek to aspirate an initial *v*—e.g., ὕδωρ, ὑπό, ὕστερος—a tendency which is intelligible if we suppose the sound of *v* to have been something like German *ü*, which is difficult to pronounce without a breath slipping out before it. The Æolic ἄμμες (ἡμεῖς) is probably right, ἡμεῖς resting on a false analogy from ὑμεῖς, where 'y.'* In

* Jelf regards the aspirate as dropped in ὕμμες or ἄμμες: "The Æolic and Homeric dialects often drop the rough breathing, as ὕμμες, ἥελιος." He adds: "The aspirate is often changed to the lenē when the word has undergone some change, as ἔκηλος εὐκηλος, ὄρος οὖρος, ἄμαξα, ἀμαξιτός" (*Greek Grammar*, i. p. 6, Oxford, 1851). The aspirate is lost in ἔσθης, which is the Latin *vestis*, and in ἔαρ, which is the Latin *ver*.

In discussing the use of the aspirate in Greek it is well to bear in mind what we read on the subject of Breathings and Accents in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* under 'Palæology': "These were not systematically applied to the texts of Greek MSS. before the seventh century. Such as are found in isolated passages in the ancient papyri do not appear to have been written by first hand, and most of them are probably of much later date. The ancient codices of the Bible are devoid of them."

other cases, e.g., ἵππος, cp. with ἵκκος, equus, &c. ; ἥλως, ἔως in Attic Greek (other dialects having smooth breathing)" (*Comparative Philology*, p. 77).

"The aspiration of unaspirated letters (in words where none of the cognate languages exhibit an aspirate or its substitutes) is found to some extent both in Sanskrit and Greek ; a parasitic 'h' being produced, most commonly by influence of an adjoining nasal or liquid or preceding σ, as in φροῦδος (προ), κλειθρον (the suffix —τρον), τέφρα (Latin *ter* —εο), λύχνος (λυκ, *luc* —εο), ἐξαίφνης (εξαπίνης). In other cases no cause for the change is apparent beyond mere laziness operating irregularly and affecting only some words permanently, e.g., βλέφαρον, σοφός, σαφής (*sap* — of *sapio*). In Latin the aspirates had early disappeared ; but irregular aspiration at the beginning of a word seems to have been known both in Latin and Greek. Both peoples left out the aspirate where it ought to begin a word, and in both there was a tendency to replace it where it had no right to be" (*Comparative Philology*, p. 77).

Ἐπίσταμαι, 'I understand,' is probably (see Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon*) the middle of ἐφίστημι, 'I place upon,' without the rough breathing ; for the Athenians used ἐφίστημι τὸν νόον, 'I place my mind upon a thing,' in the sense of 'I understand.' And so ἐπίστασις means both a 'halt' and also 'observation,' that is, a halt for the purpose of observation.

The following are the remarks made by Bishop Lightfoot on οὐχ Ἰουδαϊκῶς which occurs in Galatians ii. 14 : "The best manuscripts agree in reading the aspirated form οὐχ. For other examples of anomalous aspirates in the Greek Testament see Winer, sect. v. p. 48, and compare the note on Philippians ii. 23, ἀπίδω. In this particular instance the aspirate may perhaps be accounted

they used the digamma or 'f.'¹ This was also the custom among the Sabines, who said 'fœdus' for 'hœdus,' 'fasena' for 'harena' or 'arena,' 'fordeum' for 'hordeum,' 'vefo' for 'veho.'² Among the present inhabitants for by the 'yh' with which the Hebrew word represented by 'Ιουδαῖοι commences."

We read in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, under 'Hyssop': "Perhaps no plant mentioned in the Scriptures has given rise to greater differences of opinion than this. The question of the identification of the *ezob* of the Hebrews with any plant known to modern botanists was thought by Casaubon *adeo difficilis ad explicandum ut videatur Esaias expectandus, qui certi aliquid nos doceat*. The chief difficulty arises from the fact that in the Septuagint the Greek ὕσσωπος is the uniform rendering of the Hebrew *ezob*, and that this rendering is endorsed by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 19, 21). Whether therefore the Septuagint made use of the Greek ὕσσωπος as the word most nearly resembling the Hebrew in sound, as Stanley suggests (S. and P., 21 note), or as the true representative of the plant indicated by the latter, is a point which in all probability will never be decided." If the Greeks have taken ὕσσωπος from *ezob*, they have added an 'h' to a Hebrew word.

¹ "Quemadmodum Æoles suo digamma utebantur plerumque pro aspiratione, itaque quoque Latini veteres 'f,' quæ non est absimilis digamma Æolici, pro aspiratione utebantur" (note on Quintilian, *Instit.*, i. 4, Ludg. Batav. et Roterodami, 1665).

² See Smith's *Lat.-Eng. Dict.*, under F. 'Fasena' does not outwardly possess a strong resemblance to 'harena,' but the interchange of 's' and 'r' is not

of the British Isles the Æolians or Sabines are the speakers of the Aberdonian dialect, who would say '*fat's wrang*,' for '*what's wrong*.'¹

The English are not the only people who have made use of the 'h' for the purpose of distinguishing classes; it was used in the same manner at Rome also. Among the Romans the man who could not use his h's aright was regarded as uneducated.² When this first became the test of good breeding we do not know; but, when we first meet with it in Latin literature, the tendency among the half-educated was to add h's, not to drop them. Thus Catullus ridicules an

uncommon, and is found in other languages besides Latin dialects; it is to be seen in the Saxon word from which we derive the verb 'to choose' (see Earle's *Philology of the English Tongue*, 5th ed., p. 279). The Sabine 'fasena' seems to point to 'harena,' not to 'arena,' as the earlier form in Latin. If this be so, 'areo' was in early Latin 'hareo.' The Latins possessed some Sabine forms; thus ἑσπερος is 'vesper,' and ἔννυμι, the original form of which was ἔσνυμι, is the verb of the noun 'vestis' (see *Comparative Philology*, p. 64, Oxford, 1876).

¹ "This peculiarity is current from the Pentland Firth to the Firth of Tay" (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 237, London, 1873).

² Aulus Gellius (xiii. 6) quotes P. Nigidius as saying "Rusticus fit sermo, si aspires perperam."

Arrius,¹ who by a strange coincidence occupied the same position in the writer's mind as the London 'Arry does in English life, because he would aspirate every word whose aspiration was possible, whether beginning with a consonant or with a vowel; *commoda* on Arrius's lips became *chommoda*, *insidias* *hinsidias*, *Ionios* *Hionios*. But Catullus makes no reference to dropped h's; the inference, though by no means a necessary inference, is that Arrius was never tempted to drop them. The contempt which the satirist pours upon Arrius is very marked, and it is exactly

¹ "Chommoda dicebat, si quando commoda vellet
 Dicere, et hinsidias Arrius insidias:
 Et tum mirifice sperabat se esse locutum,
 Cum quantum posset diceret insidias.
 Credo sic mater, sic Liber avunculus ejus,
 Sic maternus avus dixerat, atque avia.
 Hoc misso in Syriam requierunt omnibus aures;
 Audibant eadem hæc leniter et leviter.
 Nec sibi postilla metuebant talia verba,
 Quum subito adfertur nuntius horribilis,
 Ionios fluctus, postquam illic Arrius esset,
 Jam non Ionios esse, sed Hionios"
 (Catullus, lxxxiii.)

If the dropping and adding of 'h's' had not been noticed by those who spoke Latin, the proverb "honus propter onus" would hardly have originated.

the kind of satire which we should aim at the half-educated man of the present day ; it is not Arrius's fault, writes Catullus, that he misuses the letter 'h' ; he is only speaking as his ancestors spoke before him. The disgust, too, of educated men at the misuse of the aspirate is expressed with equal vigour ; people were so thankful, says Catullus, when Arrius received an appointment in Syria, that for the future 'commoda,' 'insidias,' and other such words would be pronounced gently and without emphasis ; and so the report that Arrius during his voyage had spoken about "the Hionian waves" was enough to make their hair stand on end ; for this is the precise signification of 'horribilis.' The reason why Arrius spoke in this style is also disclosed by Catullus : Arrius talked 'mirifice,' that is, for effect and in order to exhibit his education. This is one of the reasons why the 'h' is added by the English 'Arry. But why should Arrius suppose that by adding h's he added elegance to his conversation ? We cannot answer with certainty, but Arrius must have known that certain words, 'lachryma' and 'sepulchrum' for example, had admitted an 'h,' and so he probably thought it would be correct to say

'chommoda.' Besides, he must have known that the Athenians were accustomed to aspirate; and the Athenians were to the Romans what the French were and are to the English, men whom they abused by calling them "Græculi," just as we abuse Frenchmen, but whose fashions they were always imitating, just as we constantly adopt French fashions and French phrases. A few centuries later we find uneducated Romans dropping, not adding h's; ¹ for St. Augustin

¹ "In Latin the insertion of 'h' was of later date (than in Greek), never being found, according to Corssen, upon Republican inscriptions. After *p*, *c*, *t*, *r*, it occurs chiefly in Greek words, but not before 100 B.C. and not generally before 50 B.C. About this period there appears to have begun a tendency to assert in pronunciation, and also in writing, a superfluous 'h'; thus Cicero (Orat. 48, section 160) says that at one time he spoke as the old Romans did, *pulcros*, *Cetegos*, *triumpos*, but afterwards conformed to the ordinary practice and said *Pyrrhus*, *Phryges* (not as Ennius wrote, *Burrus*, *Bruges*); but still *sepulcra*, *coronas*, *lacrimas*, &c. Catullus wrote a well-known epigram ridiculing the pronunciation of *chommoda*, *hinsidias*, &c.; and according to Quintilian some inscriptions in his time had *choronas*, *chenturiones*, *præchones*. In late inscriptions (fourth century A.D. and onwards) the utmost irregularity is seen, 'h' being omitted and inserted almost at random, e.g., *hac* (*ac*), *hornat*, *hextricata*, *haditus*, *hauctoritas*, *omni*, *abitat*, *inospita*; from which we infer great confusion and

remarks that there were men to whom the dropping of an 'h' was worse than a moral offence; his words are, freely translated, "If a man murders the word 'human' by calling it 'uman,' he will more offend his hearers than if he had committed a real murder."¹ But it is possible that Augustin and Catullus did not refer to the same class; Arrius was

uncertainty in the use of the aspirate in the ordinary pronunciation of those who cut the inscriptions.

"In the MSS. of the best classical authors and in the writings of grammarians there is a great deal of uncertainty in the spelling of particular words, the errors being more often in omission of 'h', from reaction, probably, against the tendency noticed by Cicero and Catullus" (Papillon's *Compar. Philology*, p. 77).

¹ "Vide, Domine Deus, et patienter, ut vides, vide, quomodo diligenter observent filii hominum pacta litterarum et syllabarum, accepta a prioribus locutoribus, et a te accepta æterna pacta perpetuæ salutis negligant, ut qui illa sonorum vetera placita teneat aut doceat, si contra disciplinam grammaticam, sine aspiratione primæ syllabæ 'ominem dixerit, displiceat magis hominibus, quam si contra tua præcepta hominem oderit, cum sit homo" (*Confessions*, i. 18).

"Magis timebam barbarismum facere quam cavebam, si facerem, non facientibus invidere" (*Confessions*, i. 19).

On the tendency of cultivated men among the Romans at one time to drop 'h's', at another time to retain them, see Roemer's *Origins of the English Tongue*, p. 587 note.

evidently a pushing, self-made man of some importance who wished to be considered to talk in an educated manner ; Augustin may have been referring to the working classes when he spoke of men saying '*omo* instead of *homo*. If this is so, the state of matters among the Romans was precisely what it is in England ; for, speaking generally, it is the half-educated who add h's, and the uneducated who drop them. After Augustin's time the misuse of the aspirate must have become worse than it had ever been ; for the language of Rome was rapidly decaying along with the Western Empire, and thousands of barbarians were now becoming acquainted with the Latin tongue. A strange state of matters with respect to the letter 'h' must have existed in Spain during the early days of barbarian occupation, when St. Isidore,¹ Bishop of Seville from 600 to 636, found it necessary to explain the difference between *habeo*, I have, and *ab eo*, from him, between *hos*, these, and *os*, a mouth, between *honos*, honour, and *onus*, a burden, between *hora*, an hour, and *ora* a shore. It is likely that in no languages has the aspirate played such a prominent part in social life as in Latin and

¹ S. Isidori *Opera Omnia*, v. p. 37, Romæ, 1802.

English; but it has been put to a similar use in other countries; for it is sometimes a religious test; in Bosnia¹ the Roman Catholics call Christ Krist and themselves Krisciani, while the Greek Christians speak of Hrist and of themselves as Hrisciani. The same test was once used to distinguish the Ephraimites from the other Israelites: "The Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said Nay, then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right" (Judges xii. 5, 6). In reality the Ephraimites were right; it was they who kept to the ancient form of the word; but they were the

¹ Evans' *Through Bosnia*, p. 96.

"The English or Anglo-Saxon language originally abounded in strong guttural sounds, as in the words *thought, nought, fraught, night*, but these have been all rejected by the polished English of the two last centuries, while the Scotch still retain them. On the other hand the nobles and gentry of Germany pronounce the German consonants with a variety of guttural sounds, while the peasantry sink all the gutturals as being too grand for people of their rank" (O'Donovan's *Irish Grammar*, p. 40, Dublin, 1845).

beaten party, and so were held to be incorrect. This at least would be the true statement of the case if the Israelites had been Aryan, not Semitic in language; but in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (London, 1863, under "Shibboleth") we read: "The Ephraimites, it would appear, in their dialect substituted for *sh* the simple sound *s*." In a standard book of reference we should have expected some such words as these, "The Ephraimites had retained the *s*, while the Gileadites had substituted for it *sh*."

Taking into consideration the fact that the dropping of *h*'s in late Classical Latin was prevalent, and remembering the general tendency of all languages to become easier in pronunciation (for nature abhors a meaningless difficulty), we are not surprised to find that the Romance languages, or those originating from the Latin generally or always discard the '*h*'; thus the French take their '*avoir*' from '*habere*,' the Italians their '*istoria*' from '*historia*,' the Roumanians their '*omu-l*' from '*homo ille*.' The French turn '*Havelock*' into '*Aveloc*';¹ Herleva, William I.'s mother, becomes in French

¹ Freeman's *Old Eng. Hist.*, p. 263.

Arlette ;¹ 'oc' in 'Languedoc,' the Provençal word for 'yes,' comes from 'hoc,' and so means 'that is it'; 'oil' in 'Languedoil,' the old word in Northern France for 'yes,' is 'hoc illud,' 'that is so,' and, later on, became 'oui'; 'Adelaide' is a name for a Teuton woman in a Romance dress; for it is properly 'Adelheid,' or 'nobleness,'² the Romance influence involving the dropping of the 'h.' 'Harpoon,' which comes from the Greek ἀρπαγή, a hook, through Low Latin, is in Spanish 'arpon,' in Italian 'arpagone.'³ It is asserted in the *Roman de Rou* that the English war-cry at Hastings was 'Oli-crosse,' or 'Holy Cross';⁴ this piece of information tells us that, whether the English of that period dropped their h's or not, the French certainly did. A foreign physician resident in Scotland about 1523, turns 'Hamilton' into 'Amulthon.'⁵ On the other hand, the French occasionally add an 'h,' at least in

¹ *Origins of the English Tongue*, p. 493 note, Kegan Paul, 1888.

² Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, bk. ii. ch. 3.

³ Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary*, under 'Harpoon.'

⁴ Hosmer's *Anglo-Saxon Freedom*, p. 33, London, 1890.

⁵ Fraser-Tytler's *Hist. of Scotland*, iii. p. 387, Edinburgh, 1845.

spelling, and we may suppose that they did so once in pronunciation. Thus, *ostrea*, an oyster, becomes *huitre*; *octo* is changed into *huit*. This custom of adding an 'h' is said to be Frankish.¹ *Horde*, a wandering tribe, comes through the French from the Tartar *ordu*, a camp.² But while some h's have been dropped in the Romance languages,³ others have been retained, at least in writing.

At the present time, however, the appearance of an 'h' in a language is no evidence of its use; for there is not a single 'h' pronounced in French⁴ or in Modern Greek.⁵

¹ Roemer's *Origins of the English Tongue*, p. 587, note.

² Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary*, under 'Horde.'

³ The Italians turned the name of the famous mercenary Hawkwood into 'Augut' and 'Auti' (*Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1890, p. 6).

⁴ We have stated that the aspirate has already vanished from French, but on this point there seems to be some doubt. "It has long disappeared from Italian, and is now rapidly vanishing from French" (*Chambers's Encyclopædia*, new ed., 1895, under 'H'). The French retain the aspirate in 'histoire' in writing, but it must have become mute before 'estoire' and our 'story' were derived from it.

⁵ "The rough breathing is written, but never pronounced. All initial vowels and diphthongs are pronounced with a smooth breathing" (*Modern Greek*, by Vincent and Dixon, London, 1893).

There are also certain words in our own tongue which possess the silent 'h.' Among them are words taken from the French; we found the 'h' silent and have kept it so; a well-known example of this is 'heir.' In the case of others, fearful, perhaps, of being accused of dropping our h's, we have lately restored the 'h' to its rightful position; thus, 'humble' is no longer 'umble.' With others, again, we have thrown the misleading 'h' aside, and so now we spell an ostler as we call him. Educated persons are agreed as to most of the words which have a right to the silent 'h'; but there are a few about which there is a doubt. Speaking generally, the older generation treats the 'h' in these cases as silent, while the younger pronounces it. There is a marked tendency at present to decrease the number of such words, but the restoration of the 'h' is sometimes quickened by circumstances; thus the sarcasm of Dickens and the contemptible character of Uriah Heap have caused the 'h' to reappear in 'umble' much sooner than in 'ospital.' This tendency is seen in the present attempt of some to sound the 'h' in 'humour' when used in the sense of 'wit.' The following quotations show the truth of

the assertion made above—that all authorities do not agree upon the pronunciation of some of the words whose initial letter is ‘h’:—

“‘H’ is silent at the beginning of the following words, *heir*, *heiress*, *honest*, *honesty*, *honour*, *honourable*, *hour*. In *herb*, *herbage*, *hospital*, *humble*, and *hostler* it is sometimes sounded, sometimes mute. In *humour* and its compound the ‘*hu*’ is sounded *yoo*.”¹

“Omit the ‘h’ in *heir*, *heiress*, *herb*, *honest*, *honour*, *hospital*, *hostler*, *hour*, *humour*, and also in their derivatives.”²

“The correct pronunciation of this difficult letter is one of the most delicate tests of good breeding. The quality of the sound depends partly on that of the following vowel, and its intensity to some extent on the accentuation. The aspiration is stronger in *humble* than in *humility*, in *human* than in *humane*, in *history* than in *historical*, in *hostile* than in *hostility*; but it is the same in *happy* and *happiness*, since the accent rests

¹ Latham’s *English Language*, ii. p. 39.

Analogous to the English pronunciation of ‘*humour*’ is the Spanish pronunciation of the Latin *hirtus*, which is *yerto*. (Smith’s *Latin-Eng. Dict.* under ‘*hirtus*.’)

² *The Voice and Public Speaking*, p. 106, Hodder and Stoughton, 1879.

on the same syllable. It is stronger in *who* than in *when*, in *hole* than in *whole*. In *honour* it is very faint, in *honourable* and *honesty* it is almost inaudible. It is stronger in *host* than in *hospital*, whilst in *hostler* it has so completely disappeared that the spelling *ostler* has become usual. It is retained in *hare* and *hair*, but it is evanescent in *heir* and *hour*, though retained in *hereditary* and *horologue*. No general rule can be laid down for the pronunciation; it depends on the usage of good society, which changes from generation to generation. In good French society the aspirate is disappearing; in England and America the reverse is probably the case.”¹

Though it may be sometimes difficult in England and wherever English is spoken to say whether an ‘h’ ought to be pronounced or not, because there exists no authority to lay down the law on the point, yet everywhere it is not so; for the German Government in 1880 abolished certain h’s as unnecessary in writing (see the *Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1890, p. 135).

When an ‘h’ comes in the middle of a word, but at the beginning of a syllable, it is

¹ *Chambers’s Encycl.*, new ed., 1895, under ‘H.’

sometimes sounded and sometimes not.¹ When the word is of Latin derivation, and the component parts of it have no meaning by themselves, the 'h' is generally not pronounced; instances of this are 'exhort,' 'exhibit,' and 'exhilarate'; but for some reason we sound the 'h' in 'adhere,' 'abhor,' and 'exhale.' When the word is of English derivation, and can be resolved into two words each of which is significant, the 'h' is retained in most cases—for example, in 'uphold' and in 'hothouse' and 'pothouse,' but not in 'forehead.'² It can be well understood that an 'h' which is in the middle of a word may be left out through mere carelessness, and that it requires not only a good ear but also a good bringing-up in order to be sure about the correct placing of these middle h's, but how it comes to pass that

¹ But Latham, in his *English Language*, ii. p. 39, writes: "When 'h' follows any letter whatever in a different syllable, it is sounded: as *haphazard*, *nut-hook*, *inkhorn*, *foolhardy*, *Amherst*."

² We think that Scotsmen pronounce the 'h' in 'forehead,' but Wynton did not:—

"Ane has a horne in his foret" (i. p. 34, *Historians of Scotland*.)

"Ewyne in the myddys of his foret" (i. p. 35, *ibid.*).

h's are introduced into the middle of words almost passes comprehension; they would seem to be introduced out of sheer wantonness; thus we hear Primitive Methodists styled Primit-hives;¹ and this peculiarity is at least as early as the Middle Ages.² It is true that the Latin 'postumus' is sometimes written 'posthumus,' from the mistaken idea that it is derived from *post* and *humus*, but we cannot suppose that it was ever pronounced so. In the Middle Ages, however, h's were inserted in such a way that they must have been pronounced; there could have been no other reason for their insertion; thus we meet with 'abhominabilis,' 'perhennis,' 'perhendinare,' 'Britthanium.' There seems to be some excuse for 'Johanna' taking the place of 'Joanna,' for Bede's always speaking of 'Daniei,' the West

¹ This pronunciation of the word is known in East Anglia (see Jessopp's *Arcady*, p. 79).

² We have 'Graveshende' as well as 'Gravesende' (*Annal. Monast.* iv. pp. 120, 227), and 'Remesheye' as well as 'Rameseye' (*Annal. Monast.*, iv. p. 369). It is singular that the writer, who, more than all others, uses this uncalled-for 'h' is the Scot, Wynton, who writes 'fenyheyd' for 'feigned' (ii. p. 97), 'assolyhyd' for 'assoiled' (ii. p. 112), 'Dunhowyn' for 'Dunoon' (ii. p. 407), 'Senyhowry' for 'Seignory' (ii. p. 413), 'beyhond' for 'beyond' (ii. p. 386).

Saxon bishop, and for the same spelling occurring in some manuscripts of the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 731; for nature appears to dislike the conjunction of two vowels (this is one of the occasions on which the Gaels use an 'h'), but for the instances quoted above it would be difficult to find any justification.

It is a present-day custom among some of the English poor who affect a correct manner of talking to put on h's in order to give point to their conversation; and it is possible that this was also in the minds of those who wrote 'abhominabilis' and 'perhennis'; they wished, it may be, to accentuate the meaning of the words, to form in fact quasi-superlatives.¹ That the

¹ The case of 'abhominabilis' seems to be rather one of mistaken derivation: "There are in all literatures numerous instances where words have been corrupted in orthography and finally changed in meaning in consequence of the adoption of a mistaken etymology. An example of this is the common adjective 'abominable,' which was once altered in form and meaning by a mistake of this sort, though better scholarship has now restored it to its true orthography, and more nearly to its proper signification. It is evidently regularly formed from the Latin verb 'abominor,' itself derived from 'ab' and 'omen.' 'Abominable' accordingly involves the notion of that which is in a religious sense profane and

'h' is used by uneducated people in England and by educated people in some other countries to give expression or to impart some shade of meaning is a fact beyond any dispute. In English an 'h' is often put on by those among the uneducated who wish to talk correctly. It may seem to some strange to say so, but the assertion admits of no doubt. It is not as a rule the very poor who introduce h's, but the small shopkeeper and the villager who reads at home in the evening instead of going to the public-house. They are slightly better educated than many of those with whom they associate, and naturally wish to make their superiority evident; for some reason they adopt this plan of doing so. We have been told that there lives or was living a short time ago at

detestable, or, in a word, of evil omen; and Milton never uses it or the conjugate noun 'abomination' except with reference to devilish, profane, or idolatrous objects. Quite early in English literature some sciolist fancied that the true etymology was 'ab' and 'homo,' and that its proper meaning was 'repugnant to humanity,' *inhuman*. This derivation being accepted, the orthography was changed into 'abominable,' and in Old English books it is often used in a sense corresponding to its supposed origin, nor has it even yet fully recovered its appropriate meaning" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 54).

Grasmere a village schoolmaster who, as coming from the Midlands, or, as Northerners would say, from the South, would drop his h's. The people of Grasmere do not naturally drop theirs; but in their opinion the English of the schoolmaster was model English, and therefore they would drop them if they wished to show themselves off in their best light—if, for example, they spoke to tourists.

But an 'h' is often added for another reason; it is often used for the sake of emphasis. An educated man speaks quietly and well within himself; and if he finds it necessary to emphasise his meaning, he can easily do so by raising or lowering his voice. But an uneducated man does not find this so easy; his voice is comparatively noisy and rough, and he cannot without some difficulty make it noisier or rougher; so he has recourse to h's. Whether he does so consciously or unconsciously is another question; for it is a matter of everyday occurrence for a man to accuse another of misusing his h's, when he does so himself. A church organist before beginning his choir practice once scolded the choir-boys severely for the way in which they dropped their h's; he told

them that bad pronunciation in this respect completely spoilt the effect of good singing, and was for several other reasons most reprehensible ; "so do be careful, boys, for the future," he continued, "for my sake, for your own sakes, for everybody's sake." He then sat down at the harmonium with the intention of beginning the practice, but he had not played more than a few notes when he discovered that there was something the matter with the instrument. "Dear me," he said, "I believe that something has gone wrong with the 'armonium." A lady whose pronunciation of the letter 'h' was rather uncertain once went to a stationer's and ordered a number of invitation cards that she proposed to issue for an evening party. She particularly instructed the stationer to print 'Igh Tea' in the left-hand corner. When the cards arrived they all bore the letters I.T. in the corner specified. The printer had, it is clear, jumped to the conclusion that his customer had invented some new contraction after the manner of 'R.S.V.P.' The lady, we may be sure, never discovered the reason for what she called the stupidity of the printer. A man and his wife together with a youthful son

were once seen to enter an eating-house. On entering they sat down at one of the tables. The father, after glancing at the joints on the sideboard, said to his son, "'Erbert, what will you 'ave?" "I think I'll 'ave a little 'am, father." "'Erbert," says the father, "you shouldn't say 'Am'; you should say 'Am.'" Hereupon the wife interposes; looking round at the people sitting at the next table, who seemed amused at the conversation, she remarks, "'Ark at that now; did you 'ear what they were saying? They both thought they were saying 'Am,' and they were saying 'Am' all the time." Mr. Gladstone used to relate the following story connected with himself: At the celebrated election in 1865 at which he lost his seat for Oxford University, becoming, to use his own phrase, unmuzzled, his opponent was Mr. Gathorne Hardy. The practice at a contested election was for each voter to record his vote by word of mouth before tellers for each party. The late Professor Henry Smith was acting as teller for Mr. Gladstone, when an uncouth country clergyman entered, and to the usual request for whom he wished to record his vote replied in his confusion, "I vote for Mr. Glad——"

I mean for 'Ardy." "I claim that vote," quietly put in Professor Henry Smith. "No, no," protested the clergyman, "I did not finish the name." "Quite so, but you did not even begin the other," retorted the Professor. We may be sure that the clergyman went back to his country living feeling convinced that Professor Smith was a very foolish sort of person, was quite unable to talk sense, and was far inferior to the type of professor prevalent in his day. It is indeed certain that some Englishmen do not know that they drop their h's. Frenchmen elide the letter, but they are aware of the elision; Englishmen, however, and these truthful ones, are often heard to laugh at others for committing this terrible mistake when they do it continually themselves. A clergyman was once asked why he did not say 'For Jesus Christes sake' in the Prayer for All Sorts and Conditions of Men, when 'For Jesus Christ His sake' was clearly ungrammatical and only a seventeenth-century mistaken explanation of the phrase.¹ He replied that nothing would induce him

¹ This is not Earle's opinion of the origin of 'his' in this sense (see his *Philology of the English Tongue*, 5th ed., p. 547).

on any consideration to drop an 'h.' He little knew that he hardly ever opened his mouth without dropping an 'h.' He would have dropped a good many more than he did, but he practised a very deliberate way of speaking, and this gave him time to put the h's on. If taken by surprise he had no h's at all; thus on one occasion, having to check a person in a great hurry, he exclaimed, 'Old 'ard!' There could be no one who better exemplified in his manner of speech the Semitic idea of the letter 'h,' which was that it was a three-barred gate which had to be jumped; he therefore approached it with caution and very deliberately. H's, then, among some classes in England are put on or taken off according to circumstances; the heat of the weather, or a temporary want of breath, or natural laziness will be the cause of the disappearance of an 'h'; anger or indignation, especially if it be sudden, will cause the addition of one. On one occasion a man who had caught a cricket-ball a few inches off the ground was accused of taking it as a bomb-ball. The accusation was so unjust (for there was no doubt that his catch was a fair one), that he replied in tones of evident anger: "Why, I caught it in the

hair." On another occasion a police constable who was attempting to move a man from an engaged compartment of a railway carriage, finding that "You must come out, sir," had no effect, went so far as to add, "I tell you, sir, you must come hout."¹

But once upon a time the educated Eng-

¹ The following newspaper cutting gives a true though sarcastic description of one style of English conversation: "Mr. Holyoake urges the importance of daily watchfulness in speech. He would have ordinary conversation well and clearly spoken; whether question, answer, or anecdote, every word should be carefully said. That is why the French usually speak so well—they never speak ill. They are proud of their language as an instrument of expression. They talk with neatness and epigrammatic point even when they are in dressing-gown and slippers. They have but to take off the dressing-gown and slip on a dress-coat to be perfectly equipped for feasts of reason and suppers of the gods. They have no drawing-room manner or platform manner, because all their life is manner, and they are perpetually concerned in the adequate production of their own individuality. With us, lazy men have been known to lay aside their aspirates in hot weather. That is just the way, of course, to lose them in a crisis of a shipwreck, or of that worse terror—a few remarks in response to a call from the chair."

Horne Tooke speaks of letters as "like soldiers, being very apt to desert and drop off in a long march" (Taylor's *Words and Places*, p. 381). This remark is especially applicable to the fortunes of the letter 'h.'

lish were not nearly so careful about the use of their h's as they are now; and this want of care seems to have been continued among a class of them to whom the mediæval times are naturally more attractive than they are to ordinary Englishmen, and who might be expected to show a tendency to observe old customs both in speech and in other matters; for the hereditary Roman Catholics, as we have been told on good authority, used, at least a short time ago, to pronounce 'house' as if it were spelt 'ouse'; or, as our informant put it, the aspirate on such words as 'house' and 'home' was very slight. In the *Memoirs of the Verney Family* (Longmans) we meet with the following specimens of seventeenth-century English among the English squirearchy, 'his heer and 'is brother,' 'a member of the hoper hose.' Taking it for granted that when the article *a* became *an* before an 'h,' the 'h' was in practice dropped although it still appeared in print, we find that the dropping of the 'h' in such a case was at the time of the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible very frequent¹; but the existence of

¹ "In 1611 the usage before words beginning with 'h' was by no means uniform. Thus we find *a half*, *a hurt*,

'ane' instead of 'a' in some periods of Scottish literature not only before a word beginning with 'h,' but before all words, must be accounted for in another way.¹

a hairy man, a hammer, a hole, a hard thing, a harp, a high wall, a horseman, a hot burning oven; while we more frequently meet with *an half, an hammer, an hole, an hairy man, an hard man, an harp, an high hand, an horse, an hundred, an hot, burning oven*. The former usage appears on the whole to be exceptional, and we may infer that at the beginning of the seventeenth century the sound of 'h' had much less of the aspirate in it than it has at the present day. . . . It must be remembered that *an* (A.S. *an*, one) was the earlier form and *a* the latter" (W. Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-Book*, p. 1, London, 1884. For the Biblical references see page 1).

It is sometimes debated at the present time whether 'a' should become 'an' before an aspirated as well as an unaspirated vowel. Dean Alford's rule in his *Queen's English* (p. 43) is this: "When the accent is on the second or any following syllable, we may use 'an' for 'a,' because the first syllable by losing its accent loses also some portion of the strength of the aspiration." In the opinion of some, the reason why 'a' becomes 'an' before an aspirate is that a few centuries ago h's were not generally pronounced in England, the choice lying between 'a house' and 'an'ouse.' The latter was preferred; it would be written 'an house,' but it never would be so pronounced.

¹ The use of 'an' or 'ane' in Old Scotch for 'a' before a consonant as well as a vowel arises, not from the dropping of h's (a thing which never occurred in

Not only were h's dropped in England some centuries ago without any compunction, but they were also added with equal readiness; for Lord Scrope, warden of the English West Marches, after making an expedition into Dumfries-shire, speaks in his report to Elizabeth about 'Hecleseagham' instead of 'Ecclefechan.'¹ The village of Ayton in Berwickshire is written 'Hayton' by Grafton, an English historian of the sixteenth century.² In Bishop Peacock's *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy* 'apples' are either 'applis' or 'happlis.'³ The monks of the Middle Ages used sometimes to speak about their 'abits' just as uneducated people might at the present day.⁴ This carelessness goes back to very early

Scotland), but from a desire to imitate the French. Certain it is that this custom did not appear until the end of the fifteenth century. Old Scottish knows nothing of it; it was introduced into literature in imitation of the French, so that the Scottish 'ane kyng' answered to the French 'un roi' (see Murray's *Dialect of the Counties of Southern Scotland*, pp. 55, 56, 57).

¹ *The Laird of Lag*, p. 19 note.

² *History of Coldingham Priory*, p. 36.

³ I. p. 160 (Rolls Series).

⁴ "We think it were convenient that, when we fetch a corse to the church, we should be in our black abbettes:" York Fabric Rolls (Cutts' *Middle Ages*, p. 250).

times, as may be seen by the following references: In 720 the Picts of Manann revolt against the Angles; the *Saxon Chronicle* says that the battle was fought between Haefe and Caere, by which, according to Skene, the rivers Avon and Carron are probably meant, Manann being situated between them.¹ Ipreswell, Wycliffe's birthplace, is now Hipswell.² Hexham is written 'Agustald' and 'Hagustaldes ham' in the *Saxon Chronicle* of the year 685 by apparently the same hand. 'Heabureahg' is Egborough.³ Bishop Heahstan is also called 'Ealdhstan.'⁴ Evesham is 'Heofeshamme' in one copy, 'Eofesham' in another, of the *Saxon Chronicle*, A.D. 1037. Hungary is called 'Ungerland' in the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 1057, but 'Hungrie' in 1096 (probably through French influence). 'Hauxwell' in Yorkshire is perhaps Akeswell, that is, 'Jacob's well.'⁵ We find 'adde' for 'had' in the *Saxon Chronicle* in 1138.

¹ *Celtic Scotland*, i. p. 270.

² *Quarterly Review*, April, 1889, p. 504.

³ *Saxon Chronicle*, A.D. 686.

⁴ *Old English History*, p. 137.

⁵ Bright's *Early English Church*, p. 130 note.

'Owl' is sometimes found with an 'h' in Middle English, and this is hardly to be wondered at, as it is 'the howler.' 'Hogs-head' should not have an initial 'h,' being properly 'oxhead,' because at first it had the device or brand of an oxhead upon it.¹ Fonthill was in the Saxon days 'Funtial'; did the Saxons drop the 'h,' or have the modern English added it? In the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 449 we read of 'Ypwines' or 'Hypwines fleot.' This carelessness about the aspirate goes indeed as far back as the earliest records concerning the forefathers of the English; for although 'earth' is found with no initial 'h' as far as we know in any early Teutonic tongue, yet in Tacitus' days an 'h' was sometimes put on,² presumably by the Teutons themselves. Haedde, the West Saxon Bishop of Dorchester, and Eddi, who wrote Bishop Wilfrid's Life, are men of the same name.³ 'Aildredus,' the Latinised form of 'Ailred,' is at times spelt with an 'h.'⁴ We meet with

¹ Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary*.

² "Herthum, id est, Terram" (Tacitus, *De Mor. Ger.* 40).

³ *Early Eng. Church*, p. 216; Moberley's *Bede*, p. 215.

⁴ *Life of S. Ninian*, p. vi (*Scottish Historians*).

'holde' for 'old' in Semi-Saxon.¹ The Kentish name 'Eormenrici' is probably the Gothic 'Hermanric.'² Alaric and the Alani are in Bede 'Halaric' and 'Halani.'³ Herod is 'Herodes' in four and 'Erodes' in two of the manuscripts of the *Saxon Chronicle*.⁴ Charterhouse has no connection with the word 'house,' but is the French 'Chartreuse.' The 'higra' or swift tide up the Humber is so called from the Danish sea-god, Oegir.⁵ Bremhill in Wiltshire is in a Saxon charter termed Bremela.⁶ Thus either our ancestors dropped the 'h,' or we moderns have added it. And yet in spite of all these instances the 'h' is a letter which, in a Teutonic language at least, has to be reckoned with, and cannot be put aside as worth nothing or meaning nothing; if it disappears, there is generally a reason for its disappearance; if it makes its appearance where it had never been before, we have a right to ask the reason why. The extreme view that an 'h' never disappears is put

¹ Latham's *English Language*, i. p. 311.

² *Ibid.*, i. p. 173.

³ *Ecc. Hist.*, i. 2.

⁴ Pp. 8, 9 (Rolls Series).

⁵ Green's *Conquest of England*, p. 118.

⁶ *Wiltshire Arch. Mag.*, vii. p. 284; Jones's *Wiltshire Domesday*, p. xix; see also p. xlii note.

forward by a writer in the *Wiltshire Archeological Magazine* (v. p. 119). Writing on the question whether Ethandun, the scene of one of Alfred's victories, is 'Heathen-dun,' he says: "Of the word 'hæðen,' a pagan, a term that might be thought singularly appropriate to the camp of an *exercitus paganorum*, as Asser calls them, I will only remark that the importance of the letter 'h' in all Germanic languages forbids us to think of it. From the oldest specimen of German in the Mæso-Gothic of Ulphilas to the modern dialects of England, Holland, and Germany, there is not, I believe, a single instance of the 'h' being either omitted or adopted contrary to ancient usage, or occurring in the same word in one of those languages and not in the other, except in the case of the personal pronoun of the third person and some foreign words such as Ikenild Street, which is often spelt 'Hikenild.' Other apparent exceptions will resolve themselves into transitive forms of 'h' of neuter verbs, or nouns with an unaspirated vowel, as *haccan*, hack, from *aex* an axe, *hedan*, feed, from *ede*, flock, *haermian*, injure from *earm*, wretched, *hyran*, hear from *ear*, the ear," &c. The same line is taken up in the discussion of

the question whether 'Highley' is the same word as 'Iglea': "Highley is an entirely different word from Iglea, and in Anglo-Saxon times would have been written Hig-lea or Heah-lea. The 'h' was formerly in this, as in other Germanic languages, a most important letter. Among all the names in Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus* that begin with 'i,' 'æ' or 'e,' there is not one which in modern English has assumed an initial 'h'; nor is there one beginning with an 'h' which has dropped it. Igfeld, Igford, Igset, and Igtun are now called respectively Ifield, Iford, Eyset, and Eyton. This, coupled with the fact that an initial 'h' has never been either assumed or dropped in any other Anglo-Saxon word or in any word of any Germanic language till recent days of cockneyism, seems to set at rest the question of Highley being Iglea" (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, v. p. 200).

There is a point, however, beyond which this rule must not be pressed; for we have, at least in mediæval days, numerous instances of the 'h' being unduly taken off or put on; thus, we have 'Hulvester' for 'Ulster,'¹ 'Heswelle' for 'Ashwell,'²

¹ W. de Hemingburgh, ii. p. 105, London, 1849.

² Matt. Paris, *Chron. Maj.*, iv. p. 151 (R.S.).

'Harundelle' for 'Arundel,'¹ 'Hyllendune' for 'Ellandun,'² 'Hathelstan' for 'Athelstan,'³ though we meet with 'Ethelstan' in the same author,⁴ 'Huchtredus' for 'Uchtred,'⁵ 'Hoxeneford' for 'Oxford,'⁶ 'Holdebire' for 'Oldbury,'⁷ 'Haymerus' for 'Aylmer,'⁸ 'Halresford' for 'Alresford,'⁹ 'Hambrisbury' for 'Amesbury,'¹⁰ 'Hichene' for the Itchen,¹¹ 'Habendune' for 'Abingdon.'¹² We meet with Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, under the name of 'Hosmund.'¹³ There was once a field in Wilton which on page 222 of *Sarum Charters and Documents* is called 'Uplandmead,' and on page 223 'Huplandmead'; while it is not unlikely that the modern surnames 'Headlam,' 'Huddleston,' and 'Helmore' are derived from 'Adelelm,' 'Athelstan,' and 'Elmar.'¹⁴ William of Malmesbury calls the Ouse

¹ Matt. Paris, *Chron. Maj.*, iv. p. 243.

² R. de Diceto, i. p. 133 (R.S.).

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 141.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. p. 144.

⁵ W. of Coventry, i. p. 227 (R.S.).

⁶ Benedict, i. p. 161 (R.S.).

⁷ *Annal. Monast.*, i. p. 96 (R.S.).

⁸ *Ibid.*, i. p. 145.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. p. 252.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, iii. p. 326.

¹¹ Gervase of Canterbury, ii. p. 421 (R.S.).

¹² *Ibid.* ii. p. 421.

¹³ *Hist. et Cart. Mon. Glou.*, ii. p. 186.

¹⁴ *Wills. Arch. Mag.*, xiii. pp. 43, 44.

'Husa,'¹ though in extenuation of the offence it must be remembered that he would only hear the name of the river pronounced by South or Middle Angles, who may be supposed to have misused their h's. On the other hand, he gives 'Amptunensis' as the adjective of the Latin name for Hampshire,² and in the *Annales Monastici* 'Hexham' appears under the form 'Exilesham,'³ and it is not unlikely that the surname 'Unwin' is the same name as 'Honewinus.'⁴

There are a few English words beginning with an aspirate which in the speech of educated Englishmen lose it under certain circumstances. Thus 'him' and 'her' may be pronounced 'im' and 'er' without the speakers being subjected to the odious charge of dropping h's. 'I saw him' is as common as 'I saw im,' but not commoner.⁵ The latter form is often made use of in rapid speech. But the greatest care has to be exercised in the dropping of such h's; we sometimes hear 'who' pronounced as

¹ *Gest. Pont.*, p. 208 (R.S.).

² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

³ IV. p. 229.

⁴ *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, xiii. p. 45.

⁵ "The 'h' of the personal pronouns is generally dropped when they come after a verb and are unaccentuated, as in 'I saw him'" (Swete's *Handbook of Phonetics*, p. 189).

'oo,' but no rapidity of utterance can justify such a pronunciation, nor the conversion of 'he of whom' into 'he ovoom.'¹ The English have not always been careful to retain the initial 'h' in words which they

¹ The following remarks are hardly severe enough on those who, under certain circumstances, omit the aspirate: "The omission of the aspirate is a far more common fault than its gratuitous interposition. The latter is exclusively confined to the vulgar, while the former is anything but rare among persons of considerable culture whose early years have been passed in certain parts of Great Britain and who are themselves often perfectly aware of their own infirmity—only remediable by the most constant watchfulness. But there is a far more widely spread, though less noticeable, slovenliness in this matter against which even the most refined speakers need to be always on their guard. It shows itself mostly in short syllables, especially in immediate juxtaposition. Thus, 'he who,' rapidly uttered, too often becomes 'heoo,' and 'he of whom' 'heovoom.' Even when attention is especially directed to it, the formation of two or three successive aspirates is, it must be admitted, not easy—e.g., in 'to have had' or 'which have had'" (*The Speaking Voice*, by Hullah, p. 58, Oxford, 1870).

The sentence, 'Why hop ye so, ye high hills?' is found difficult of correct pronunciation by those whose education has been neglected. It is absolutely necessary that they should begin well; if they retain the aspirate on 'hop' it is almost certain that they will clear the other difficulties; on the other hand, a failure to do so will involve the dropping of the 'h' in 'high' and 'hills.'

have derived from their cousins of Holland ; thus, according to Skeat in his *Concise Etymological Dictionary*, 'avast' is but the English rendering of the Dutch equivalent for 'hold fast,' an expression which is frequently heard in the hayfields of the South of England. But Dutchmen are not always particular themselves ; for 'er' is the pronunciation of 'haar,'¹ and Hengist, who, from having spent a large part of his life on the Continent, may be said to belong to Low Germany as much as to England, is called 'Engist' in Dutch.² In the case of the name of the town of Antwerp the Dutch have accused themselves unjustly of having dropped an initial 'h' ; according to an old Dutch tradition a giant with the impossible name of Antigonus used to exact the merchandise of all navigators who passed his castle on the Scheld and cast into the river the right hands of those who infringed this simple tariff ; thus 'Handwerpen' — hand-throwing — became Antwerp, and hence two hands in the escutcheon of the city were ever held up

¹ Ahn's *Dutch Grammar*, p. 14, Kegan Paul, London.

² Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ii. p. 539 note, F. Warne, London.

in heraldic attestation of the truth. But a simpler and a correcter derivation of the name would seem to be 'an t'werf,' or 'on the wharf.'¹

Another 'h' is often taken off in English where its disappearance is not generally suspected; for 'em' which is used instead of 'them' by the uneducated, and occasionally by the educated, is not a contraction for it, but is the old English 'hem' or 'heom.'² A similar abolition of the 'h' has occurred in the Scandinavian languages; the Icelandic article corresponding to the Saxon *thaet, se, seo* is *hitt, hinn, hin*; from them the 'h' is ejected, and so we have *it, inn, in*. These become in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish *et* and *en*. *Et* and *en* are now added to the word which they qualify so as to form one word; thus, *solen* is the sun, *bordet* the table.³ The Old Saxons, too, would drop the 'h' under similar circumstances; thus the English *her* is in Anglo-Saxon *hire*, in Old Saxon *ir*;

¹ Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, i. p. 83.

² 'Them' is the Danish form (see *Church Quarterly*, July, 1890, p. 415; Earle's *Philology of the English Tongue* 5th ed., p. 480.

³ Latham's *English Language*, i. pp. 262, 263

the English *their* is in Anglo-Saxon *hira*, in Old Saxon *iro*.¹ Another word whose initial aspirate sometimes suffers elision is *ham* when it is used in composition as a suffix. Although the 'h' is frequently dropped in pronunciation, it is not so commonly lost in writing. Yet its absence cannot be said to be infrequent; thus, *byttam* in the modern Oxfordshire dialect must stand for the Saxon *byht-ham*;² in Essex the 'h' is often dropped and the suffix becomes 'am'.³ Among our Frisian cousins the use of 'um for *ham* is very common—so common, indeed, that we are told by Latham that it is an almost sure sign of Frisian occupancy.⁴ But we are

¹ Latham's *English Language*, i. p. 131.

² Gomme's *Village Community*, p. 159, London, 1890.

³ Seebohm's *English Village Community*, p. 255, London, 1890. We find 'Langam' for 'Langham,' 'Wykam' for 'Wykeham' in Thomas of Walsingham, i. p. 303 (R.S.). On p. 298 we have for 'Buckingham' the variant 'Bukhyngam,' as if, though the aspirate was taken off *ham*, it had to be inserted somewhere. The disappearance of the 'h' in 'ham' when 'ham' is a suffix is frequent in the United States in the case of surnames, if, as we believe, 'Slocum' is 'Slokham' and 'Barnum' 'Barnham.'

⁴ "If we look at a map of the Dutch province of Friesland we shall be struck with the number of local names that end in *um*; if we look to one of Germany or England we shall find an explanation of its meaning.

warned elsewhere that *'um* is not invariably a Frisian suffix and that it does not always stand for *ham*, but sometimes for a dative plural termination, and that then it is an evidence of Danish settlement.¹ Analogous to the change which often comes over 'ham' when it forms the ending of a proper noun is that which overtakes 'holm' and 'helm' under similar circumstances. Hoddam was originally 'Hodolm'; Durham, the adjective

It is the *ham* in such English words as Nottingham. It is the *heim* in such High German words as Oppenheim and Mannheim. It is the *hem* in such Low German words as Arnhem, Berghem. It is the German *heim*, the English *home*, the Anglo-Saxon *hām*" (Latham's *English Language*, i. p. 128).

¹ "The Frisian termination *um* for the names of places is very frequent. It has been taken as a contraction of *heim* and so to denote a German origin for the Frisians. But there are in undoubtedly Scandinavian districts local names ending in *um* which are taken from the dative plural. Thus in Old Norse *Upsal* was a plural, *Upsalir*; 'at or in *Upsal*' *a* or *i Upsölum*. In speaking of towns we use most frequently in English the objective with the preposition *at* or *in*, and in like manner in Old Norse the dative, as *a* or *i Husum*, would occur oftener than any other case of the name of that town. It is much more probable that 'Husum' would mean *at the houses* or *at the village* than *Hushjem* or *Hausheim*, the *house home*, which would be pleonastic" (*Student's Manual of the English Language*, p. 24).

of which is in Mediæval Latin *Dunelmensis*, is undoubtedly a corruption of 'Dunholm,' for we have the forms 'Dunolm,' 'Dunelm,' and 'Dunhelm' in the *Hist. Dunelm. Tres Scriptores*, pp. 26, 37, 38.¹ The second syllable in the name of the well-known West Saxon bishop and saint is 'helm,' the Saxon for a hat or covering, and so William of Malmesbury rightly scouts the idea, put forward by one Faritius, that 'Aldhelm' could mean 'senex almus,' though it is to be remarked that he does so, not because a Saxon and a Latin root are not usually combined in one word, but because that derivation would involve the loss of the 'h' in 'helm.'²

The Gaels of Scotland and Ireland and, we may suppose, of Man also find the 'h' very useful, but they do not use it

¹ Other forms are 'Holdelm' and 'Hodolm' (*Kentigern's Life*, p. 358, *Historians of Scotland*).

² "Faritius allusit ad nomen, ut diceretur Aldelmus, quasi senex almus. Sed ego, si ludis insertis occupationes legentis furari liceret, dicerem longe aliter interpretatione detorta quod Aldhelmus interpretatur galea vetus. Sic enim debere scribi nomen suum, H litera interposita, ipse Sanctus in prologo enigmatum suorum perspicue innuit; et in epistola ad Withfridum aperte se priscam protectionis galeam dicit" (*Gest. Pont.*, p. 332, R. S.).

for the same purposes as some of the uneducated English. With the Gaels it is used for three purposes: ¹ to make a change in case, or a change in gender, or for euphony's sake. Thus the Gaelic name for Iona is 'Ii,' but 'the island of Iona' is 'eilean na Hii.' ² The 'h' here is, in fact, the sign of the genitive case. But it may also denote the feminine singular nominative; thus 'duine mor' is 'a great man,' but 'bean mhor' is 'a great woman'; 'each' is 'his horse,' 'a h'each' 'her horse,' the possessive 'a' requiring an 'h' after it in the case of a feminine noun beginning with a vowel, but being elided if the noun be masculine and begins with a vowel. We are, however, told that originally the aspiration

¹ In the Gaelic language the Beth-Luis-nion, so called as was the Greek Alpha-Beta from the names of the first letters of the *Letter-Muster*, consists of eighteen letters, including the euphonic aspirate, which, however, initiates no Gaelic word, and was formerly represented by a simple point or dot, its chief use being to modify the sound and value of letters by adfixture and combination with them" (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. ii. p. III).

² For the reason why the isle of Ii is called Iona see *S. Columba's Life in Scottish Historians*, Introduction, p. cxxviii; it arises, as will be seen, from a mistake.

took place only after feminine nouns in 'â.'¹ It is also used for the sake of euphony in order that two vowels may be separated; thus 'anabarrach,' excessive, becomes an adverb by having 'gu' prefixed, but it is separated from it by an 'h'; thus 'excessively' is in Gaelic 'gu-h-anabarrach.'² We are told in Rhys' *Celtic Britain* that Wales is chiefly Gaelic not British in blood, and that Welsh has supplanted in Wales the Gaelic tongue.³ We do not know whether in Modern Welsh the use of the aspirate marks a change in case, but in Old Welsh the 'h' was sometimes so used; thus, 'the

¹ "Aspiration appears (in Old and Middle Irish) as a distinguishing characteristic after the nominative singular of all feminine nouns, although originally it was used only after the feminine nouns in â" (*Scottish Celtic Review*, p. 31).

² The Gaels do not invariably put in an 'h' for euphony's sake; "an irregular use of 'h' exists in Modern Gaelic between certain prepositions and the nouns they govern, as 'le h'uamhas' and 'le uamhas,' 'le h'urram,' and 'le urram'" (*Scottish Celtic Review*, p. 48).

The Gaelic preposition 'co' or 'cu' (modern 'gu') originally ended in a consonant, as shown by its not being followed in Old Gaelic by aspiration. The consonant was 't,' *kará* being the equivalent of the 'co' in Greek (*Scottish Celtic Review*, p. 91).

³ See Map, S.P.C.K., London, 1882.

church of Asaph' is 'Llan-*hassaph*,'¹ and 'Carleon' is 'civitas legionum super *Huisc*' in the *Liber Landavensis*.²

But although the employment of the aspirate among the English and the Gaels is not identical, there are, nevertheless, points of similarity between the vulgar English and the Gaelic method of using the 'h.' An uneducated Englishman uses it either to mark an emphasis or for the sake of euphony; and this is precisely what the Highlander does; he wishes to show emphatically that a word is in the genitive case or of the feminine gender, or he finds that the conjunction of two vowels in different syllables is not euphonious; therefore he uses the 'h.'³

¹ *Life of S. Kentigern*, p. lxxix (*Scottish Historians*).

² Bright's *Early English Church*, p. 7 note.

³ The following quotation from the *Scottish Celtic Review* (p. 36) well expresses the two uses of the 'h' in Gaelic: "The aspiration may have been produced by a certain tendency towards phonetic dissimilarity, in other cases through the carelessness with which enclitic and proclitic words were pronounced. . . . Aspiration has been used to denote relationship or dependence, when of two words the succeeding was closely connected with the preceding one, in the construction or pronunciation of a sentence. . . .

"In New Irish it has become a rule to distinguish the

'H' is often used in Gaelic where its existence is not apparent to the eye of one who cannot read the language; thus 'th,' 'sh,' and 'fh' are all pronounced as 'h.' As Gaelic words beginning with 't' and 's' are frequent, and as the perfects of these verbs begin with 'th' and 'sh,' this virtual 'h' is very common. Thus, from 'tuiteamh,' to fall, and 'seasamh,' to sit (the 'amh' and 'adh' being the infinitival endings), comes 'thuit mi,' I fell, and 'sheas mi,' I sat, which are pronounced as 'hootch me' and 'hase me.' While 'sh' becomes in effect 'h,' 's'

accusative of the pronoun of the second person by the aspirated form 'thu' from the nominative 'tu'" (*Scottish Celtic Review*, p. 36; see too O'Donovan's *Irish Grammar*, p. 127, Dublin, 1845).

"In the ancient Irish manuscripts 'h' is sometimes prefixed to words beginning with vowels where it has no apparent grammatical use, just in the same manner as the lower classes in England prefix 'h' in 'the h-eagle flies h-over the h-oaks'; but this is never found in modern manuscripts or printed books" (O'Donovan's *Irish Gram.*, p. 31).

For this apparently needless use of 'h' see S. Patrick's Hymn in *Scottish Celtic Review*, pp. 57, 58, 59. From words in the Hymn like *hifrescisin*, 'in hope,' and *hipraiceptaibh*, 'in precepts,' which we should have expected to be *infrescisin* and *inpraiceptaibh*, it has been conjectured that 'h' was often inserted when 'in' was shortened into 'i.'

followed or preceded by a thin vowel, that is, by 'i' or 'e,' is pronounced in Gaelic as 'sh'; thus 'Se,' he or it is, must be spelt as 'shey' in order to convey its pronunciation to English ears, and 'Si,' she is, as 'she.'

No explanation has, as far as we know, ever been offered of the habit, which many Highlanders adopt when talking English, of speaking of themselves as 'she.' One day a Highlander, who, not being accustomed to trains, did not appreciate their punctuality, reached the platform of a station just as the train which he wished to catch was leaving it. He at once made a dash at a carriage door, but was thrown back either by the guard or by contact with the train. Shaking his fist at the guard who was laughing at his ineffectual efforts he shouted in defiance, "She shall have shustice." A hard-working priest, who had for some years ministered in a town near the Highland border, took as the text of his last sermon to his congregation, "She has done what she could." His brother clergy and the better educated of his flock, when they heard or heard of the text, smiled; for the priest's religion, if deep, was of a feminine cast; those of his poor people who were High-

landers supposed that he said, "I have done what I could"; and this was precisely what he meant, though he did not like to say so. As this peculiarity of diction in the broken English of a Highlander has never been explained, we venture to offer an explanation. If he does not say 'Tha,' it is, which is the equivalent of Yes, nor 'Chaneil,' it is not, which is tantamount to No, a Highlander, when conversing, generally begins his sentence with 'Se' (pronounced 'shey,' as the 's' is aspirated and the 'e' is sounded in the Continental way) or with 'Si' (pronounced 'she'), 'Se' meaning 'it is he' or 'it is that' and 'Si' meaning 'it is she.' It may be seen how frequently one or other of these sounds is the initial syllable in a sentence when it is understood that a Highlander rarely says 'I do it,' but generally 'It is myself that does it,' rarely, 'She is a good woman,' but 'It is herself that is a good woman.' To this explanation two objections, we admit, may be stated. Why, it may be asked, should 'she' in a Highlander's broken English stand for 'I' rather than for 'you' or 'he' or 'she' or 'it'? To this objection our answer is this—'Se' (pronounced 'shey') is the commonest com-

mencement of a Gaelic sentence ; it naturally therefore stands in the Highlander's English for the pronoun which is most commonly used. If an Englishman, especially an uneducated one, generally talks about himself, much more does an Highlander when talking English ; for his list of English words is small, and of that small list most words have to do with his own life. There is also another objection ; Highlanders, it might be said, do not begin most of their sentences with 'Si' (pronounced 'she') but with 'Se' (pronounced 'they') because it is much more common to say 'It is I' or 'It is this' than to say 'It is she.' 'She' therefore stands for 'Si' not 'Se,' and so Highlanders confess themselves to be feminine, which is absurd ; they would never, it might be urged, refer to themselves in such a ridiculous manner. But to this it may be replied that there is not so much difference as might be supposed between 'Se' and 'Si' as they are both pronounced short.

For how many centuries an 'h' has been used in Gaelic for these three purposes only it would be hard to say ; for in early Irish it seems to have been used much as it is now used in some English dialects, that is, in a

careless or indiscriminating way. This is the case, as has been remarked, with S. Patrick's Hymn; but there are also many other instances. We find in the *Book of Deer*, published by Bishop Forbes of Brechin (p. xxxv), 'aurire' instead of the Latin 'haurire' and 'Jhesus' for 'Jesus'; and on p. lix the rubric runs "hisund dubeir sacrifaice dau," 'here give the sacrifice to him'; here 'hisund' stands for 'an sud.' 'Rathad,' the Gaelic word for 'road,' is a loan-word from English; for before General Wade's time there were no roads in the Highlands; here the modern Gaels have introduced an 'h,' though not an initial 'h'; for in Gaelic 'th' is sounded as 'h.' 'At' is used in Mediæval Scotch for the relative 'that' (see *Wynton*, i. p. 22, l. 377, and p. 23, l. 388, *Historians of Scotland*), and also in some parts of Scotland at the present time. This is generally supposed to be a Scandinavian feature; but it is found only on the Celtic borderline and in districts lately Celtic in speech; and so the dropping of the aspirate is probably of Celtic origin (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, pp. 25, 26).

It is not, however, the custom now among

Highlanders to be careless about h's, nor has it been the custom for a very long period ; for so convinced are the Gaels that a word cannot begin with an 'h,' if it is a noun, in the direct case,¹ and, if it is a verb, in the present tense, that when they wish to domesticate a foreign name beginning with an 'h,' they at once remove the 'h.' Thus 'Harald,' a common name among the Norsemen who harried the western isles of Scotland, is changed into 'Eralt.' It is not that the Gaels have any wish to drop their h's, but they suppose that 'Harald' is the genitive of 'Erald' ; 'of Harald' is therefore translated by 'na h'Eralt.' Again, 'hogshead' is turned into 'togshead' or 'togsead' for the same reason ; they cannot conceive that a word should begin with an 'h' in the nominative ; 'of a hogshead' therefore is 'na thogshead,' the 'th' having the sound of 'h' in Gaelic. The Gaelic for 'hall' is

¹ The tribe between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Tay were the Horestii. If they were Gaelic in origin we should have expected that there would have been no 'h' in their name. It is doubtful whether they were Gaelic or British, as between the Forth and the Tay there are proofs of both Gaelic and British occupation. In taigh-osda, the Gaelic for an inn, the 'h' has disappeared, for 'osda' must be the equivalent of 'hostel.

'talla,' although it is derived from a Scandinavian word which is identical with the English word, and it is formed from it as 'togshead' is from 'hogshead.' When the Northmen used the word 'hall,' the Gaels concluded that it was the genitive case or a euphonious form of 'talla,' whose genitive in Gaelic would be 'thalla,' pronounced, since 'th' stands for 'h,' as 'halla.' Who would ever suppose that 'M'Cosh' meant 'the son of Thomas'? And yet the surname is formed in a perfectly regular manner. The genitive of 'Tomas,' as the word is pronounced, is 'Thomais,' the 'th' of which is equivalent to the aspirate 'h,' while the genitival 'i' inserted before 's' gives the 's' a sibilant sound; thus the proper pronunciation of 'Thomais' is 'Homash.' Then there is a very common custom in Gaelic of aspirating an 'm,' that is, of converting it into 'v,' although in writing the 'm' is retained, but is followed by an 'h' in order to show that it has changed its sound; thus 'Thomais,' or 'Homash,' as it is pronounced, becomes 'Thomhais,' pronounced 'Hovash.' There is also an equally frequent custom in Gaelic of eliding an 'mh' or 'v'; thus, 'Thomhais' or 'Hovash' becomes 'Hoash'

or 'Hosh.' And so at last, by certain steps, all of which can be proved in Gaelic grammar, 'Mac Thomais,' the son of Thomas, resolves itself into 'M'Cosh.' It is supposed to be peculiarly characteristic of uneducated Englishmen to call their hat an 'at,' but the Highlander, too, drops the 'h' when he adopts the word into his own language. He does not indeed say 'at'; for he turns the 't' into a 'd,' and puts an 'i' before and an 'e' after the 'd'; the word therefore becomes 'aide,'¹ and the pronunciation of 'd' as if it were an English 'j' converts 'aide' into something very different from 'hat' or 'at'—into, in fact, a word which could be spelt in English as 'arje,' provided that the 'r' were not rolled. In laying down the law, however, that there is no word beginning with 'h' in Gaelic we must except interjections,² which, perhaps, are no excep-

¹ Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, v. p. 324, Paisley, 1890. If the Highlander had treated 'hat' as he had 'hall,' he would have changed it into 'tat,' which he would have pronounced as the modern English pronounce 'tart,' that is, with an unaspirated 'r.'

² 'Hiu,' 'hau' (iii. p. 88), 'haobh' (iii. p. 125), (Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Paisley, 1890).

tions, as they are considered by many not to belong to the parts of human speech. And there is also another exception, which is an undoubted exception, although it does not appear to be so on the surface; for the well-known Gaelic combinations, 'sh,' 'th,' and 'fh,' are all sounded as 'h'; in each case the former of the two letters is treated as non-existent, and what remains is a simple 'h.' Still, it must be remembered that no Gaelic verb has its present tense beginning with 'sh,' 'th,' and 'fh,' though they frequently are the initial letters of the past tense.

We believe we have the authority of the Professor of Gaelic in the Edinburgh University for stating that the language has been degenerating for many centuries by becoming more and more aspirated; and this view is supported by the *Scottish Celtic Review*, in which we read that "aspiration appears as a distinguishing characteristic (in Old and Middle Irish) after the nominative singular of all feminine nouns, although originally it was used only after the feminine nouns in â" (p. 31). But there is also a tendency of long standing to drop the aspirate, at least when combined with 'c';

for 'Balmerino' was anciently 'Balmerinoch';¹ and the modern 'Rollo' must be the sixteenth-century 'Rolloch'; the ancestors of a man called Durno must have originally come from Dornoch; and at the present time Rhiconich in Sutherlandshire is generally, if not always, pronounced without the 'ch.'

The dot used in Irish for the aspirate is the sign in Latin manuscripts for deletion. In Old Irish the dot is only put above 's' and 't'; for when they were aspirated they were in pronunciation deleted. The other aspirated consonants had an 'h' written above them. In Later Irish the dot became the universal sign of aspiration. Letters are often found unaspirated in Irish manuscripts, though we know that the aspirate must have been sounded. Thus there is often a confusion in writing between such letters as 'm' and 'b,' and 'g' and 'd.' This would have been impossible if they had been unaspirated; for then the distinction between them is very plain; but it would be very likely to happen when they were aspirated, as they have

¹ Fraser-Tytler's *History of Scotland*, ii. ch. i. p. 48, Edinburgh, 1845.

in this case almost, if not quite, the same sounds.¹

The fortunes of the letter 'h' are peculiar and varied in England and Scotland. Omitting the Highlands and Wales, where the inhabitants naturally imitate the English of those with whom they are thrown,² we find that the 'h' is dropped throughout England except in the districts north of the Tees; and that it is never dropped in Scotland except in words which, having been taken from the French, never really had an 'h' at the time of their translation from the one language to the

¹ Not only is 'm' confused with 'b,' and 'g' with 'd,' but sometimes 'm' and 'd,' when both of them are aspirated, are identical in sound; thus 'to do' in Gaelic is either 'deanamh' or 'deanadh.' There is little doubt that originally the two forms belonged to different dialects, and were differently pronounced.

² Some people whose mother-tongue is Gaelic talk fairly broad Scotch, others fairly good English; we have heard a woman from Skye drop her h's; but she was a servant in London.

Geraldus Cambrensis says that Welshmen sometimes drop letters, and then are laughed at (*De Instit. Princip.*, p. 185, London, 1846). But there is no evidence of their dropping h's. The Welsh who live in that part of Mid Wales that marches with England are inclined to drop their h's, no doubt through contact with the neighbouring English, who speak the dialect that does not possess a single 'h.'

other.¹ Again, throughout the whole of Scotland an 'h' is never added, and we believe that this is the case in England also to the north of the Tees. We confess, however, that we are in some doubt as to the southern limit of the northern variety of English. It has been said that in Hampole's day it prevailed from Caithness to the Humber; and Ellis, in the map attached to his *English Dialects*² makes the line between the Northern and the Midland dialects to run in such a way that he assigns the northern part of Lancashire and all Yorkshire, except the south-west of it, to the northern variety. As, therefore, the 'h' is never dropped in Scotland or in Northumberland, we should expect that it would never be dropped in the larger part of Yorkshire; but of this we have doubts. In taking the Tees as the line of division, we have taken the

¹ All the French words beginning with silent 'h' which were adopted into Scotch at the time of the French alliance retained the 'h' except one—'uilzie'—which discarded the 'h' of 'huile,' perhaps because it was known that 'huile' being derived from 'oleum' had no claim upon an 'h.' For a list of these words see Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, pp. 58, 59.

² London, 1869.

old boundary line between Bernicia and Deira. The dialect of Yorkshire must have been much affected by Danish colonisation; Northumberland and Durham, not having been colonised by Danes, would naturally retain their old mode of speech.¹

The Lowland Scot of mediæval days may not have been so particular as to his h's as his representative of the present day—at least he was not so in orthography; for the times when Wynton omits the 'h' are innumerable. But this at least can be said in his favour—in the long list of mistakes of this character it may be seen that nearly all the words are Classical or Scriptural or French. If French, they naturally would not have the 'h,' and the French custom of dropping the 'h' would

¹ "The original seat of the North Angle dialect was the district between the Tyne (we should have said the Tees) and the Forth; thence it extended southwards and westwards to the Humber and the Irish Sea. It is still most typically represented within the ancient limits of Bernicia—the Forth, the Solway, and the Tyne; the language south of the Tyne having been greatly affected by the Norse of the Denalagu, and in later times by the literary Midland English" (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, pp. 88 89).

influence the pronunciation of Latin and Hebrew words.¹

The dropping of the 'h' in French, Latin, and Scriptural names is found in others besides Wynton, and these not Scottish. We have 'eritage' in Wycliffe's Bible (Matt. xxi. 38) and 'Erodyanys' for 'Herodians' (Matt. xxii. 16). Geraldus Cambrensis gives us 'omelia' for 'homelia' (v. p. 122) and 'Eraclis' for 'Heraclis' (v. p. 220). And yet there is a distinct tendency to add

¹ Ercoles	...	...	Wynton, i.	p. 46
Omere (Homer)	...	...	"	p. 3
Omely	...	...	"	p. 10
Ebron	...	...	"	p. 12
Erbys (herbs)	...	...	"	p. 13
Omage	...	...	"	p. 25
Ayre (heir)	...	...	"	p. 25
Ost (host)	...	...	"	p. 29
Oreb (Horeb)	...	...	"	p. 39
Agarenes (Hagarenes)	...	...	"	p. 40
Yppon (Hippo)	...	...	"	p. 47
Ungary	...	...	"	p. 50
Ellady (Hellas)	...	...	"	p. 50
Ebrewe	...	...	"	p. 65

Occasionally Wynton makes a mistake in a native name; for he writes 'Kyngorne' for 'Kinghorn' (ii. p. 38). 'Tyribus,' the ancient slogan of the men of Hawick, is supposed to be 'Tyr haeb us,' 'Tyr keep us,' Tyr being a heathen god (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 18).

the 'h' in some Scriptural names ; thus, 'Eli' is 'Heli' in *Grostete's Letters* (p. 53); Elijah in the *Chronicle of Wilton* (p. 26), is 'Helye,' and in *Grostete's Letters* (p. 133) 'Helias'; 'Elisha' is made to take the 'h' by *Geraldus Cambrensis* (iv. p. 142), by *Thomas of Ely* (p. 285), and in *S. Ninian's Life* (*Historians of Scotland*, p. 157).

To the south of the Tees the adding of an 'h,' either from mere wantonness or for the purpose of giving better expression to one's

There has been an addition or a dropping of the 'h' in the following Berwickshire names : Edrington, Edington, and Ednam. 'Edrington' was once 'Hadrington,' 'Edington' 'Hadyngton' (*Hist. of Coldingham Priory*, p. 251), and 'Ednam' 'Hedenham' (*Celtic Scotland*, ii. p. 368). 'Amisfield' and 'Hempisfield' are interchangeable words (*Hist. of Families of Dumfriesshire*, p. 73). Fordoun calls Oransay 'Hornesay' (Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. lxxv, *Historians of Scotland*). Wynton calls the Ister or Danube 'Hystere,' which is also the form found in the *Itinerarium Reg. Ric.* (i. p. 36), written by an Englishman ; the same author speaks of the Iberi as the 'Hiberi' (*Itin. Reg. Ric.*, i. p. 30).

Wynton sometimes uses an 'h' in positions where it can hardly be pronounced : thus, we have 'assayleyheande' and 'falyhyng' (i. p. 73) for 'assailing' and 'failing,' 'byyhonde' (i. p. 4) for 'beyond,' 'yhere' (i. p. 76) for 'year'; "'y' consonant is usually followed by 'h,' which seems intended merely to distinguish it from the vowel 'y'" (Editor's note, *Wynton*, iii. p. 341).

feelings, is very prevalent and is growing in extent. We believe that this habit properly belongs to the counties that have been settled by Jutes and Angles and not to those inhabited by Saxons; for in Wessex the only men who put on their h's are those slightly raised above the class of labourers and also the small tradespeople, and they do it but sparingly;¹ while such a thing as adding an 'h' is hardly known among the farm labourers. Instances, of course, occur from time to time, but they can generally be explained. Thus, a clergyman who had just become vicar of a country parish in South Wilts was told by one of his parishioners, a

¹ When the policeman, as related in the story on page 49, said, 'You must come *hout*, sir,' the bystanders took up the sentence and went about repeating it in derision. The meaning of their conduct is that being West Saxons the dropping of an 'h' on the part of the policeman would not have attracted their attention, but that they were extremely amused by the addition of an 'h'—a habit which they as dwellers in Wessex never practised.

All dialect speakers in modern English novels do not represent the actual tongue of the district from which they are supposed to come. *Handley Cross*, in which Jorrocks, the cockney sportsman, is depicted to the life both in his conversation and in other details, is disfigured by the painfully unreal Lowland Scotch of the hunts-

strong Nonconformist, that he and the vicar would never be able to see 'h~~ey~~e to h~~ey~~e.' This was in response to some remark from the vicar which seemed to minimise the differences between Church and Dissent. The Nonconformist, however, did not wish that the ties between the two should be strengthened. The vicar was much surprised at the addition of the aspirate; but he discovered afterwards that there were good reasons for it; for the man came from Newbury, a place which, although within Wessex, is much subjected to the influence of London; and in addition to this he was a local preacher, and for that reason better

man. Mr. Hardy, the author of many novels the scene of which is laid in Wessex, is ignorant of the dialect of the Wiltshire or Dorsetshire labourer. If we wish to know what that dialect is we must turn to Tom Hughes' *Scouring of the White Horse*, there being no difference between the speech of Berkshire and that of Wiltshire and Dorsetshire. Mr. Blackmore, in *Lorna Doone*, represents the Devonshire peasantry as unduly aspirating their words; 'Exmoor' is 'Hexmoor' (ch. i.), 'ordered' 'hardered' (ch. iii.), 'old ash' 'hold hash' (ch. iii.). He may be correct, but generally the Celts of Britain take their English from the nearest English districts, and the Celts of Devon could not have derived this habit of putting on 'h's,' if indeed it does exist, from the West Saxons.

educated than the ordinary labourer and therefore inclined to aspirate words. 'H' is said to be used emphatically in West Somerset; for example, in 'we ham.'¹ But it is possible that this 'h' originated in the fact that the old English for 'I am' is 'Ich am';² for the aspirate might easily be transferred from the pronoun to the verb. But 'we ham' is not a proper West Saxon expression, although it may be now, in these days of change and of corruption of dialects, occasionally met with. It was met with on the following occasion: A clergyman in Wessex was once reproving a parishioner for his drunkenness; and in order to get to the right side of the man he remarked, "We are all, I know, miserable sinners." An affirmative answer would naturally have been expressed by "We be, zur;" but the solemnity of the occasion demanded, the man thought, finer language; and so he replied, "We ham, sir." In the same way the Lowland Scotsman lays aside his broad

¹ *Transactions of Philological Society*, 1875-1876, i. p. 212.

² 'Cham' is still used in Somerset for 'I am' (see the song, "Cham a geamster owld and tough" in Tom Hughes' *Scouring of the White Horse*).

Scotch both in church and at family worship, and performs all his prayer, praise, and Bible-reading in the English of the Midlands. The insertion of so many *h*'s makes it difficult to believe that *S. Editha sive Chronicon Vilodunense*, a poem of the date of the fourteenth century in praise of the foundress of Wilton Abbey, was written in the Wiltshire dialect, although this statement is made by Horstmann, its German editor.¹

The theory that the Saxons never used to put on their *h*'s, whereas the Angles and Jutes did, is not one, we admit, which can be thoroughly substantiated; but yet it might

¹ Thus we have—

Hyrsshe	for Irish (p. 3).	Hyze	for eye (p. 38).
Herles	„ earls (p. 3).	Heysey	„ easy (p. 108).
Herlyche	„ early (p. 7).	Hyrone	„ iron (p. 98).
Hethelynge	„ Athelney (p. 13).	Hevelle	„ evil (p. 72).
Hevesong	„ evesong (p. 32).	Hawe	„ awe (p. 73).
Holde	„ old (p. 37).		

William I. is called 'Willyham' (pp. 96, 97, 108), but 'Willyam' (p. 2). These are but a few of the instances to be found in the poem.

At Chippenham in Wiltshire land now called 'England's' and in Edward I.'s time 'hinland' is supposed to be properly 'inland' (Gomme's *Village Community*, p. 174). The village of Imber in Wiltshire is called in *S. Osmund's Register* (ii. p. 30, Rolls Series), Himmemere.

have been true once ; for Essex, Middlesex, and Sussex are surrounded by counties Anglian or Jutish, and so could hardly escape being influenced by them. It is, besides, a very catching habit with men of no education ; for by means of it they can express themselves emphatically. Thirty years ago it was unknown in Southern Wiltshire ; now it exists, in or near towns at least, and through the spread of education (it may seem strange to say so) and with the increased means of communication with London, we see it, or rather hear it, spreading rapidly. For in and around London there seems to be the wildest confusion with respect to *h*'s ; all that appears to be certain about them is that they are taken off when they ought to be used and used when they ought not to be.¹ It is probable that

¹ This confusion is said to be brought about by the system of Cross-Compensation (see *Douse on Grimm's Law*, P. 37, sect. *b*). The same principle is exemplified by the suppression of the *r* when it should be heard, and addition of it when it should not be ; thus 'door' is pronounced as if it were spelt 'doah,' and then 'Victoria *rour* Queen' is spoken of. Again, all present participles ending in 'ing' are pronounced as if they ended in 'in' or 'en' ; and then 'captain' becomes 'capting,' 'certainly' 'certingly,' and 'pardon' 'parding.' Again, 'Sam Weller' is pronounced 'Sam Veller,' and 'veal' 'weal.'

'Holborn,' pronounced 'Olborn' by cockneys, takes its name from its being 'the hollow burn'; but the idea exists that it was originally 'Oldburn' or 'the old burn'; that Londoners by invariably putting on the 'h' at last established 'Holborn' as the correct form; and that then, when they had succeeded in effecting the change, they at once dropped the 'h,' and reverted to the original form. In modern Greek Ios is Nio and Naxos Axia; that is to say, where there is no 'n' one is put in; and where there is

The principle of Cross-Compensation runs through all these changes (see *Douse on Grimm's Law*, P. 47, sect. 22). It is apparently a law of language that, when the *spiritus asper* enters upon a course of debilitation, it has a tendency, on the other hand, to thrust itself in where it has no business. One of the conditions of Cross-Compensation seems to be the existence, side by side, of two dialects, the speakers of one of which try to imitate the speakers of the other. There is at the same time the feeling on the part of the former that they are not successful in their efforts, and there is the wish to do better in the future; having therefore unduly dropped an 'h' they take the earliest opportunity to put one on (see *Douse*, P. 47, sect. 22 c). Under no other circumstances could the following story be true: There was once a small boy at a public school, named Hill, who was generally suspected of pretending to be ill when it suited his purpose; he would, for example, appear to be quite well during morning school and would eat his dinner

one, it is taken off; "this seems almost a parallel to the prefixing and omission of the 'h' in English."¹ That 'Holborn' does in reality mean 'the hollow burn' and not 'the old burn' seems probable from this—that in the parish of Dinton, near Salisbury, there is a narrow valley between two hills which goes by the name of 'Holborn'; here it must be, from its position, 'the hollow burn.' The following story, which is a true one, brings out the difference in vowel sound between

exactly as the other boys did; he would play at cricket or at football, as the case might be, and he would seem to play with a fair amount of spirit and vigour; but when the bell rang for afternoon school he would go to the matron and tell her that he did not feel well enough to go into school that afternoon. It would be often found that on that afternoon the subject or subjects in this boy's class would be in his opinion beastly, but naturally the matron was not aware of this. What she did know was that this boy's illnesses came on very suddenly, and at a time too when he was looking remarkably well. Her suspicions therefore were aroused. Still, being a kind-hearted woman, she did not wish to be hard on the boy; nevertheless she had to do her duty, and part of it was to examine into smaller ailments and those which occurred when the doctor was not on the spot. She had then to ascertain whether there was really anything the matter with the boy; and so thus she began: "Now, Master 'Ill, are you really *hill*?"

¹ Tozer's *Islands of the Aegean*, pp. 85, 86.

different parts of England, the inability of a Londoner to conceive of an 'h' being sounded where it was written, and also the manner in which the cockney dialect is making its way in Southern England. A man was once prosecuted by the police in North Wilts for taking part in a disturbance; the charge brought against him was that, when two men were fighting, he, instead of trying to stop them, or at least keeping himself quiet, aided and abetted them. But, said the accused in astonishment, "How could I be said to be encouraging them when I was trying to pacify them? I kept on saying 'Order! order!'" The 'o' in 'order' he of course pronounced in the usual West Saxon manner, which is to make it a sound between an ordinary 'a' and an ordinary 'o.' In this way such words as 'horse' and 'corn' are always pronounced in Wessex; an outsider hearing this peculiar 'o' for the first time might easily confuse it with 'a.' And this is just what the policeman, who was a Londoner, had done. "That's just what I say, your worship," said the policeman; "as the men were fighting, the accused kept on shouting 'Arder! Arder!' If that's not aiding and abetting, I don't know what is.

Why, your worship, he was telling the men to 'it 'arder ; and now he confesses to it." " I didn't say 'Arder,'" pleaded the accused, " I said 'Order.'" " There he is again," said the policeman, " he cannot deny it." Fortunately the magistrate was acquainted with the Wiltshire dialect and so he dismissed the case.

Besides the dialect of Wessex there is another, according to Ellis in his *English Dialects*,¹ in which the 'h' is dropped or, rather, in which it is never put on, because the dialect does not possess an 'h.' This dialect Ellis calls that of the Midlands, and he includes in the district where it is spoken the south-west of Yorkshire, the southern half of Lancashire, all Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire, the portion of Shropshire that lies to the east of the Severn, and the northern part of Warwickshire (see map).

¹ "The aspirate is as much ignored in all words by dialect speakers as it is in these two ('hour' and 'honour') by all polite speakers. There is no sign of its being left out ; it is merely treated as non-existent. And this absence of aspirate extends into non-dialect speaking classes in the Middle division. A few put the aspirate in wrongly ; but this is comparatively rare" (*English Dialects*, p. 69).

It is interesting to note that this tendency to misuse *h*'s is observable in mediæval as well as in modern days, and that this is the case in Latin as well as in English, and that it also occurs in other writers besides those Englishmen who wrote either in their own or the Latin tongue. It is interesting, too, to mark that apparently the more illiterate an English writer of Mediæval Latin is, the more mistakes he makes with his *h*'s. Everywhere indeed in the Latin of the Middle Ages we notice a carelessness¹ in the use of the 'h,' which was, we can hardly doubt, partly begotten of the fact that Latin was not the mother-tongue of the writers; in all or nearly all of them we meet occasionally with *h*'s put on or taken off for no apparent reason; the inclination to

¹ It was not always carelessness; it is clear that there was sometimes a set purpose in the mode of using the 'h.' We thus frequently meet with 'michi' for 'mihi,' and 'nichil' for 'nihil,' either because there was a tendency towards aspiration, as in Modern Gaelic, or because, as some think, 'h' was originally sounded in Latin as a guttural 'ch,' and an attempt was made to perpetuate the proper sound: see *Ninian's Life in Historians of Scotland*, ch. i. p. 39; *Thomas of Ely*, pp. 7, 26. "Heu michi quod sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem" (*Piers the Plowman*, v. 448). We find 'Achab' for 'Ahab' in *Chron. Wilt.* p. 26.

put an 'h' between two vowels when they belong to different syllables but the same word is not unknown ; and from time to time we find an 'h' placed before a vowel in the middle of a word ; and sometimes, too, we think, though we cannot be certain, that an 'h' is used to give a superlative sense to an adjective or to accentuate the meaning of a verb ; but these are not points to which we now refer. What we do refer to is the wholesale and often apparently unmeaning misuse of the letter in question. It is noticeable that the writer who fails most prominently in the proper use of the 'h' is perhaps among the most illiterate of mediæval writers and also comes from the eastern Midland portion of England. This is just what we should expect ; for at the present day, too, in England it is the half-educated men who cannot use their *h*'s properly, and among the districts where the misuse of the 'h' is conspicuous this part of England occupies a prominent place. This writer is Thomas of Ely, the author of *Liber Eliensis*, who was living about the year 1153¹. But in order that he may not be condemned unheard, we will compare him with other

¹ See Preface, p. i., London, 1848.

writers of post-Classical Latin, mostly countrymen of his own, and we will distinguish the different circumstances under which it is possible to misuse an 'h'; for the atrocity of the act is not the same on all occasions. These writers are Adamnan the biographer of S. Columba, Bede, Geraldus Cambrensis, the author or authors of the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, the writer of *S. Ninian's Life*, the writer of that of S. Kentigern, and Bishop Grostete of Lincoln.¹ Most, if not all, of these writers drop the 'h' occasionally at the beginning of words; it is probable that the words so misused were generally those of common occurrence in conversation, and so naturally apt to be pronounced in a slovenly manner, or else they were of Greek derivation. Sometimes they were both of common occurrence and also Greek in origin; and then it was extremely probable that they should drop

¹ Adamnan died in 704, Bede in 735, Geraldus Cambrensis was alive in 1215, the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* extends from 1066 to 1176, the *Life of S. Ninian* is the work of S. Ailred, who was alive in 1164 (*Hist. of Scotland*, v. p. ix), Jocelyn of Furness who wrote the *Life of S. Kentigern* was alive about 1185 (*Hist. of Scotland*, v. p. 313), and Bishop Grostete was Bishop of Lincoln from 1235 to 1253.

their 'h's'; thus we meet frequently and in many authors with 'ymnus,'¹ 'ebdomas,'² 'agius,'³ 'ypotamus,'⁴ 'ypocrita.'⁵ The frequently used words 'hortus,'⁶ 'hos-

¹ *Life of S. Kentigern* (*Hist. of Scotland*, v. p. 207); *Thomas of Ely*, pp. 72, 74.

² *Chron. de Bello*, pp. 17, 61, 77; *Thomas of Ely*, p. 85; *Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 189.

³ *Thomas of Ely*, p. 176.

⁴ *Geraldus Cambrensis*, v. p. 69.

⁵ In the eighteenth chapter of the *Life of S. Kentigern*, 'hypocrita,' or some derivative from it, has the 'h' three times, and is without it in twelve cases. This would show that the dropping of the 'h' was due to a great extent to carelessness. Again, in the *Office of S. Kentigern* we have 'odiernus' (p. xcvi) and 'hodiernus' (p. xcix) (see the *Life of S. Kentigern* under the above-named pages).

In *Thomas of Ely* we have 'istoriarum' on p. 75, though on p. 72 the 'h' is retained in the word or in one of its derivatives four times in thirteen lines.

Hervey, Bishop of Ely, though his name is spelt properly on pp. 94, 275, is 'Ervaus' on p. 96 of *Thomas of Ely*.

The 'h' in 'hypocrite' was generally dropped in Mediæval English (see Matt. xxiv. 51 in Wycliffe's and in Tyndale's version).

⁶ *Thomas of Ely*, pp. 4, 124 (thrice). And yet he has 'hortus' on p. 168. On p. 89 he has 'hortus'; here, having succeeded in retaining the 'h' in 'hortus,' he naturally prefers 'hollera' to 'ollera.'

In *S. Ninian's Office* in the *Breviary of Aberdeen* we have 'ortus,' 'ortolanus,' and 'hortolanus' (*Life of S.*

pitium,'¹ and 'hesternus'² are not seldom found without the 'h,' especially in *Thomas of Ely*, but he almost alone can write such a word as 'actenus.'³ And if Thomas of Ely is the great offender in the dropping of initial *h*'s, he is almost equally conspicuous in the improper insertion of them.

Bede, if we are not mistaken, only adds an initial 'h' with proper nouns,⁴ and with 'arundo,' which was sometimes spelt with an 'h' in Classical times; and once we find him writing 'habundantius.'⁵ Geraldus Cambrensis adds an 'h' to two proper names,

Ninian, pp. xxi, xxv, *Hist. of Scotland*, v.). 'Ortis' for 'hortis' in *Chron. de Bello*, p. 188, *Chron. de Melsa*, i. p. 382, and *Chron. Abb. Rames.*, p. 8. Jocelyn (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 194) calls a kid 'edus.'

¹ *Thomas of Ely*, p. 87.

² *Ibid.* p. 272.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 55. We have 'actenus' in *Thomas of Walsingham*, ii. p. 17, and 'ac' for 'hac' in one manuscript of *Dunstan's Memorials*, pp. 48, 133. On the other hand, Thomas of Walsingham (ii. p. 312), supposing 'istic' to be compounded of 'iste' and 'hic' instead of being composed of 'iste' and the suffix 'ce,' writes 'isthic.'

⁴ Halaricum, Halanorum (i. 11). In 'insula Hii' (iv. 4), the island of Ii or Iona, it cannot be said that the 'h' is improperly inserted, as it is the sign in Gaelic of the genitive case.

⁵ 'Harundine' (iii. 25), 'Habundantius' (iii. 27).

'Orosius'¹ and 'Orestes',² and to 'eremus,' a desert,³ which for some reason is not infrequently aspirated in Mediæval Latin. It may perhaps be worthy of notice that Geraldus's three examples have 'r' as their second letter. This 'r' was an aspirated 'r,' as all r's were at that time, and its proximity may have been the cause of the initial aspirate. Geraldus is very irregular in his use of 'h' with 'eremus'; thus, in his second volume he has 'eremum' and 'heremitæ' within a few lines of each other, and his fourth volume contains 'eremis' (p. 253), 'eremita' (p. 255), 'heremeticus' (p. 256), 'eremeticis' (p. 259), 'eremo' (p. 259), 'heremeticam' (p. 259), 'heremi' (p. 274). Whence or under what influence, it may be asked, is the initial 'h' found in 'eremus'? Is it the case that it is the 'h' that was virtually contained in the letter 'r'? Perhaps, as time went on, the 'r' became less rough, and an initial 'h' was introduced by some writers as compensation for the loss of the rough 'r.' Another

¹ 'Horosius' (v. pp. 25, 94).

² 'Horestes' (v. p. 44).

³ In the *Registry* of the diocese of Glasgow (*Lives of S. Ninian and S. Kentigern*, v. p. 345, *Historians of Scotland*) two men are termed 'heremitæ.'

word which frequently loses its 'h' is Hybernia. In the *Life of S. Kentigern*, in the *Historians of Scotland*, we have 'Hybernia' on pp. 212, 226, but 'Ybernia' on p. 227. 'Ybernia' is the form in *S. Osmund's Register* (i. p. 304), and in the first paragraph of the *Saxon Chronicle*. This may arise from the absence of the initial 'h' in 'Erin,' another name for the same island. We do not enter upon the question whether the two roots 'Er' and 'Hiber' are the same (they might be so more easily than appearances seem to warrant; for 'Hiber' would become 'Hier' by the aspiration and subsequent elision of the 'b'), but it is possible that the absence of the 'h' in 'Erin' might in itself cause the occasional dropping of the 'h' in 'Hibernia.' On the other hand, Lynch, the author of *Cambrensis Eversus*, seems to regard 'Ibernia' as the older form; for he quotes (ii. p. 77, Dublin, 1850) an old catalogue dating, he thinks, before the conquest of Ireland by Henry II., which speaks of 'the kings of Ibernia'; and he quotes Claudianus as omitting the 'h' (ii. p. 180). And yet 'Ireland,' which can be hardly anything but 'the land of Erin,' is called 'Heorlande' by

King Alfred in his translation of Bede's History (see *Cambrensis Eversus*, ii. p. 323).

For some reason it is not uncommon for 'ostium,' a door, to have an 'h' prefixed in Mediæval Latin; both Ailred of Rivaux and Jocelyn fall into this mistake.¹ We are told by William of Malmesbury (*Gest. Pont.*, p. 399) of a thief that attempted to enter a church dedicated to S. Aldhelm that 'hesit ad hostium.' Doorkeepers are called 'hostiarii' by Thomas of Walsingham (i. p. 49; ii. p. 292);² and there is a passage in a constitution of Archbishop Stratford where it is questionable whether the 'hostiarius' was the doorkeeper or one appointed to prepare the Host.³ The 'h'

¹ 'Hostium' (*Life of S. Ninian*, pp. 147, 157; *Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 186, *Historians of Scotland*).

² Statutum est quod ad hostium hostiarius sive sub hostiarius continue sedeant (*Reg. Abb. Johann. Whethamstede*, ii. p. 311).

³ "For any letters of orders the bishops, clerks, or secretaries shall not receive above 6d.; and for the sealing of such letters, or to the marshals of the bishop's house for admittance, to porters, hostiaries, or shavers nothing shall be paid." On this Phillimore comments thus: "Lindwood understands this word to signify the same as ostiaries or persons appointed to keep the doors, and the word *janitores* (porters) next foregoing to signify those who keep the gates, whereas more

in 'hostium' has added an 'h' to Ostia, the name of a small town at the mouth of the Tiber, which is undoubtedly of the same origin as 'ostium'; for we find its adjective given as 'Hostiensis' by Geraldus Cambrensis (iv. pp. 270, 277, 279) and by Thomas of Walsingham (i. p. 16), though on two other occasions (i. pp. 48, 104) the latter writes 'Ostiensis.' Why the 'h' has been prefixed to 'ostium' it would be perhaps hard to say. We have been told that an initial 'h' in French sometimes has a Frankish origin; but this can hardly be the case here; for Skeat tells us in his *Concise Etymological Dictionary* that a doorkeeper was 'uissier' in Old French, and that it was only later that it became 'huissier'; certainly no 'h' had been prefixed at the time when we converted it into 'usher.'

Ailred of Rivaux writes 'honus' instead of 'onus,' perhaps with the intention of pointing to the truth that honours entail burdens or responsibilities.¹ A word so commonly in properly it seems that *janitores* (or porters) does express both of these, and that the word *hostiarii* (as Dr. Gibson observes) denotes those persons who prepared the host" (Phillimore's *Ecl. Law*, i. p. 106, London, 1895).

¹ *Life of S. Ninian*, p. 155. We have 'Alter alterius honera portantes' in a letter of Gregory III. (*Gest.*

use, especially on the lips of the monks and clergy, as 'hymnus' we should naturally expect to suffer the loss of the initial 'h'; and this is precisely what we find; thus, we have 'ymnis' in the *Life of S. Kentigern* (p. 251), and 'ymnum' in the *Chron. de Bello* (p. 156). In Thomas of Ely (p. 210) we have 'ymnos' with a dot, the sign of the Irish aspirate, over the 'y,' but that he ever aspirated the word is almost incredible, when we consider his disregard of proper aspiration. The *Chron. de Bello* has 'Ylarius' on p. 187, 'Hyllarius' and 'Hylarius' on p. 188. 'Ebdomas,' a word frequently in use, frequently loses its 'h'; thus, we have 'ebdomadum' in Geraldus Cambrensis' *De Instit. Principum* (p. 18), but 'hebdomada' in *Dunstan's Memorials* (p. 130). Jocelyn, in his *Life of S. Kentigern* (p. 234), spells 'arena' three times without an 'h' and twice with an 'h' on the same page. On examin-

Pont., p. 56, R.S.); but as one manuscript has 'onera,' it is not necessary to suppose that Gregory improperly added an 'h.' Perhaps with the intention of emphasising the Papal exactions, Ralph de Diceto writes 'honorosus' for 'onerosus' in the following passage: "Albertus" (the Pope's legate) "Latialiter incedens per Angliam, aliquibus in evectione vel mora locis in pluribus tridua navis visus est honorosus" (i. p. 430).

ing the instances it would seem that the aspirate is omitted in Scriptural quotations and prefixed in ordinary speech. The Orkney Isles were sometimes termed the 'Horgades'; the name is found in the Latin portion of the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 1077. We are not sure how the 'h' came to be prefixed, but we give this as a possible solution of the difficulty: the word 'Orkneys' means 'the islands of the porcs,' or pigs, that is, the sea-pigs, whether they were whales or porpoises. Now, 'porc' would in Gaelic under several circumstances be aspirated into 'phorc,' which would be pronounced 'forc'; and 'forc' would be aspirated into 'fhorc,' which is in pronunciation equivalent to 'horc'; this 'h' may possibly be the 'h' in 'Horgades.' Thomas of Ely makes the same mistakes that other writers make; with him 'ostium,'¹ 'eremus,'² and 'onus'³ begin with an 'h'; but he adds to them 'hebrietas,'⁴ and he confuses 'hora,' an hour, with 'ora,' an edge⁵ or shore. He also

¹ Pp. 33, 67, 133, 243, 245, 246, 280. ² Pp. 26, 29.

³ Honerosum (p. 79).

⁴ P. 281.

⁵ Hora clamydis (p. 272).

Geraldus Cambrensis' treatment of the 'h' is, as becomes a learned man and one who was not an

frequently adds an 'h' to the name of the island on which he lived.¹ This word is indeed differently treated by different writers. Bartholemæus de Cotton uses the word about ten times, but never once with an 'h';² Thomas of Walsingham uses it more than ten times, and once it appears with an 'h';³ it is met with in Eadmer only once, and then it has the aspirate;⁴ in the *Historians of York* it is aspirated whenever it occurs about twice out of three times⁵; William of Malmesbury nearly always uses the aspirate,⁶ Henry of Huntingdon gene-

Englishman, comparatively correct; but even he, or his transcriber, confuses 'hora' with another word—not with 'ora,' but with 'aura.' Speaking of taking the Sacrament to the sick, he directs certain ceremonies to be observed, "si tempus et aura permiserint" (ii. p. 20). 'Oram,' a shore, is in one manuscript 'horam' (*Chron. Abb. Rames.*, p. 8). In the *Chronicle of the Abbey of Meaux* (i. p. 204, R. S.), written, it is supposed, by Thomas de Burton, who was abbot at the end of the fourteenth century, we have 'hora maris' instead of 'ora.'

¹ We find Ely with an 'h' on pp. 42, 46, 257, 258, 259; but without one on pp. 2, 3, 5, 26, 38, 105, 137, 216, 240.

² Rolls Series.

³ I. p. 160 (Rolls Series).

⁴ p. 195 (Rolls Series).

⁵ *Historians of York* (Rolls Series).

⁶ In the *Gesta Pontificum* the aspirate occurs on pp. 147, 153, 322, 325, 326; there is no instance of the soft breathing. In the *Gesta Regum* it is found on

rally;¹ in *Grostete's Letters* the word occurs only once, and then it is unaspirated.² To those who look at the derivation of the word it is certain which of the two forms is correct; for it is 'the island of eels.' Bede asserted this,³ and his assertion was and is generally recognised to be the truth; but there was on the part of some a wish to derive it from ἑλος, a marsh, or from 'helig,' which was supposed to be the British for willows; while Thomas of Ely, although he is aware of the true derivation, would have preferred to believe either that the island was 'the house of God,' because 'Eli' in Hebrew means 'my God,' or that it was 'the land of God,' because 'Eli' is the Hebrew for 'God,' and γῆ is the Greek for 'land.'⁴ One reason against the derivation of 'Ely' from the Greek word for 'marsh,' or from the Welsh for 'willows' is, according to one commentator, the fact that Ely has no aspiration;⁵ but this is, as we know, no valid reason; for

pp. 101, 166, 229, 251, 267, 517, 518, 559, 573; but not on pp. 549, 551.

¹ 'Heli' occurs on pp. 9, 11, 191, 205, 251, 252, 253; 'Eli' on pp. 165, 316. ² P. 297 (Rolls Series).

³ "A copia anguillarum quæ in paludibus capiuntur nomen accepit" (iv. 19). See, too, *Thomas of Ely*, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47 note.

'eel' never had an 'h' either in Mediæval English or in Anglo-Saxon, and yet 'Ely,' its derivative, is frequently found with an 'h.' To sum up: so much can be said on the subject of the aspiration of 'Ely'; and yet how can we be critical when the *Saxon Chronicle*, which the historian Freeman teaches us to regard as next in importance to the English Bible, has in one manuscript 'Helig' and in another 'Elig' when narrating the same event? ¹ For some reason Thomas of Ely does not seem to be so conspicuous in inserting an 'h' where nature might be said to call for one, that is, when two vowels meet in the same word, and where precedent justified its insertion; for 'aënus,' brazen, was sometimes written 'ahenus' in Classical Latin; and yet we have met with only one instance of the kind in *Thomas of Ely*—'prohemium' for 'prooemium' (p. 93).² Bede and Geraldus Cambrensis err occasionally in this particular; but they only do so when the word is from the Hebrew; Bede calls the seventh-century Bishop of Wessex 'Danihel,'³ and terms John the arch-chanter

¹ Pp. 146, 147 (Rolls Series).

² Even here we have the form 'premium' in one manuscript (see p. 93).

³ *Ecc. Hist.*, iv. 16.

'Johannes';¹ Geraldus writes 'Joannes' on p. 191 and 'Johannes' on p. 192 of his fourth book. In the *Gesta Pontificum* we find the sentence 'cohercuit gravissimo edicto';² here the 'h' seems to have been intruded for the sake of emphasis; and William of Malmesbury also writes 'prohemio' for 'proemio.'³

In the matter of placing h's in the middle of words when they are not required for the purpose of dividing syllables several authors are on much the same level—Bede, Geraldus, Jocelyn, and Thomas of Ely; and the words which are so treated are to a great extent the same—'adolescens'⁴ and the derivatives

¹ *Ecc. Hist.*, iv. 18. The *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 759 in some manuscripts calls Michaelmas 'S. Michaeles tide.' We meet with 'trihumphat' in the *Eulogium* on Bishop Jocelyn (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 309).

² P. 300. 'Cohercendum' (*Matt. Paris. Chron. Maj.*, iv. p. 156); cohercebat (*Dunstan's Memorials*, p. 11); coherceatur, cohercionem (pp. 346, 404, *Reg. Abb. Johannis Whethamstede*, i.).

³ *Gest. Pont.*, p. 33. We find 'puhier' for 'puer' (*Benedict*, i. p. 161). 'Puer' when used as a surname becomes at times 'Puher' or 'Poher' (*S. Osmund's Reg.*, ii. p. lxxxvi).

⁴ 'Adolescens' (*Life of S. Ninian*, p. 141); but 'adolescens' occurs on the next page; 'adolescencie'

of 'perennis,'¹ 'perendinus,'² and 'abominor.'³ But in *Thomas of Ely* we find what we do not find elsewhere, the aspiration of some of the parts of 'ire,' to go.⁴ Again, he is prominent, though not altogether singular, in the elision of *h*'s in the middle of words. The *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*⁵ and the

in a *Eulogium* on Bishop Jocelyn (*S. Kentigern's Life*, p. 309). See too 'Roberto comite Leghestriæ' in Stubbs' *Documents*, p. 131; here there should be no 'h,' as Leicester is 'Legionis castra.'

¹ *Thomas of Ely*, pp. 83, 142, 199; *Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 163; *Eulogium* on Bishop Jocelyn (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 312); *Geraldus Cambrensis*, i. pp. 136, 182. Adelard, writing, it must be admitted, a very short *Life of S. Dunstan*, does not drop or put on a single 'h'; he even writes 'perennem' (*Dunstan's Memorials*, p. 62, R. S.).

² 'Perhendinasset' (*Thomas of Walsingham*, ii. p. 116); 'perhendinans' (*ibid.*, ii. p. 115; see also i. pp. 131, 151, 155); 'perhendinare' (*Ger. Camb.*, iii. p. 162); 'perhendinavit' (*Rishanger*, p. 194); 'perhendinans' (*Matt. Paris. Chron. Maj.*, v. p. 117). It is likely that both in the case of 'perennis' and 'perendinus' the presence of the 'h' may be accounted for by the 'h' inherent in the roughly sounded 'r.'

³ 'Abhominans' (*Bede*, v. 21); 'abhominabilis' (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 211); 'abhominandorum' (*Ger. Camb.*, ii. p. 75); but 'abominatio' on p. 310.

⁴ 'Inhiit,' 'adhire' (p. 80).

⁵ 'Exibitione' (pp. 57, 58), 'exibeatis' (p. 79, twice), but on p. 78 we have 'exhibere.'

*Life of S. Ninian*¹ offend in the same way, but not so badly as he.²

The examples given above are sufficient, we trust, to prove that among the mediæval writers of Latin the greatest offender in the matter of *h*'s is the comparatively uneducated Englishman. To him the adjective 'anhelus' or the verb 'anhelo' is a positive worry; for he either drops the 'h' altogether or puts it in the wrong place, although there should be no difficulty about the correct placing of it, since the two words come from *an*, the equivalent of the Greek *ἀνά* and *halo*, I breathe. On p. 23 we find 'anelans,' on p. 26 'hanelabat.'³ Jocelyn too places the 'h' at the beginning on three occasions;⁴ but Geraldus⁵ and the writer in the *Chronicle of*

¹ 'Exortatorio' (p. 146).

² 'Coortabatur' (p. 48), 'exilarata' (p. 65), 'adibebit' (p. 71), 'exortatio' (p. 85), 'exhaustæ' (p. 240), 'distræret' (p. 277).

³ The Earl of Chester of 1141 is described in *Robert of Huntingdon* (p. 272) as 'impossibili anhelans'—a good description of a man so sanguine that he would undertake more than he was able to accomplish. The manuscript used in the Rolls Series gives 'anhelans,' but in another the word is 'anelans,' and in a third 'hanelans.'

⁴ *Life of S. Kentigern*, pp. 178, 220, 237.

⁵ 'Anhelant' (iv. p. 183).

*Battle Abbey*¹ do not fall into this mistake. It may indeed be said that an uneducated Englishman is always afraid that he may have dropped an 'h' by mistake;² and so sometimes he will put in an 'h,' if there happen to be several words beginning with unaspirated vowels; thus Thomas of Ely makes Queen Saxburga remark with reference to East Anglia, "In cujus horis orta sum;" sometimes the occurrence of an 'h' inspires him to place one where it ought not to be; thus, we have in the *Life of S. Ninian*, "Jam enim hyems transiit, humber abiit et recessit;" here the 'h' prefixed to 'imber' seems to have been introduced because of the 'h' in 'hiems'; for we meet with 'ymber' ten lines further on. Again, we find in the same author that the concurrence of a number of unaspirated vowels causes him to forget to put in a necessary aspirate; thus, on p. 148 of the *Life of S. Ninian*³

¹ 'Anhelabat' (p. 69).

² A man who found the correct use of 'h' a trouble to him, once suggested to Rowland Hill that this stumbling-block should be abolished; to this Mr. Hill strongly objected, saying that it would never do, as it would make him 'Ill for the rest of his life.

³ We have by mistake implied that Ailred of Rivaux was uneducated. The remark applies rather to the

we read, "Nec aliquid adhuc aptum esui ortus produxit," although we have the form 'hortus' four lines further on.¹ But, as we said before, the greater offender is not Jocelyn but Thomas of Ely; in the following sentence from *Geraldus Cambrensis*, "Qui mundanas ad opes nimis inhiante aspirant et anhelant," we could not conceive him steering his way without falling into some of the pitfalls.

copier of the manuscript. In discussing the usage of 'h' by various authors it is of course impossible to differentiate the author and his scribe. This may be called a confession of inaccuracy; but it cannot be helped; differentiation in such a case is impossible.

¹ In *Hist. Dunelm. Tres Scriptores* (p. 19) the writer begins a sentence with an 'h,' though he ought not to, and so two more h's follow naturally: "*Hostia clausurunt . . . ignem et fumum hostiis et fenestris adhiberi*"; here 'ostium' again takes the 'h' and 'adhiberi' is not deprived of one. On p. 15 he drops his 'h' in the first word of the sentence, perhaps because there were no 'h's' following; thus "*Anelitibus ad exitum urgeri coepit*." On p. 23 he has 'hanelitu.' The same tendency is seen in English. We have heard a person described as 'ale and 'earty. Let the reader say over to himself 'Hale and 'earty' or 'Ale and hearty,' and he will find how difficult it is to do so. If the first 'h' be dropped in the following verse all the other h's are almost sure to disappear and the verse will be pronounced thus: Now know I that the Lord 'elpeth 'is Anointed, and will 'ear 'im from 'is 'oly 'eaven, even with the 'olesome strength of 'is right 'and (Psa. xx. 6).

It is evident to those who hear the conversation of the lower and middle-lower classes in England that 'h' is sometimes used to express an emphasis; but it is questionable whether this feature is apparent in Mediæval Latin. Still, it may well have been the case; for 'abundo' and its derivatives—words to which emphatic persons were naturally prone—have rarely or never the 'h' in the books of well-educated writers, whereas Thomas of Ely uses the 'h' as often as not. Grostete, one of the most learned Englishmen of his day,¹ and Geraldus Cambrensis, a very well-educated man, half Welsh and half Norman,² never use the 'h' with any part of or with any derivative from 'abundo.' Bede uses it in his description of Egberht's determination, while in fear of death, to devote himself to good works.³ The *Chronicon de Bello* uses it four times, on one occasion when

¹ The word is used three times on p. 122 of his *Epistles* (Rolls Series).

² 'Abundantem,' iv. p. 188. Owen Glendwr, the Welsh patriot, is called 'Howen' by Thomas of Walsingham (ii. pp. 268-272), and in *Capgrave's Chronicle* (pp. 277-292) he is 'Howeyn'; but a man of the same name is called by *Ger. Camb.* (v. 167) 'Oen.'

³ 'Habundantius' (*Ecol. Hist.*, iii. 27).

the 'h' might seem almost required in order to separate two vowels.¹ It is found once in Jocelyn;² also in the *Office of S. Kentigern*,³ and in that of S. Ninian.⁴ We meet with it at least once in *William of Malmesbury*,⁵ in the *Hist. Dunelm. Scriptores tres*,⁶ in *Capgrave's Chronicle*,⁷ in *Rishanger*,⁸ and also in the *Chartulary of Abingdon Abbey*,⁹ in a

¹ 'Habunde' (p. 167); "Optimo habundaret frumento" (p. 56); "Fructuum habunde provenientium" (p. 130); "Habundanti iniquitate" (p. 113). Perhaps the aspirate inserted in the last example is an evidence of the anger of the monks because livings were being taken away from the Abbey.

² "Omnibus habundat necessariis" (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 201).

³ "Copia miraculorum habundat" (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. xcvi).

⁴ *Life of S. Ninian*, p. xxiii. This 'h' occasionally appears in English mediæval works; thus, "With gret habundauns of gode" (*S. Editha*, p. 103, edited by Horstmann, Heilbronn, 1883). See too *Wynton*, i. pp. 29, 41 (*Historians of Scotland*).

⁵ 'Ex habundanti' (*Gest. Pont.*, p. 69).

⁶ 'Habundabat' (p. 55, Surtees Society).

⁷ 'Habundaris' (p. 23, R. S.).

⁸ 'Habundantia' (p. 3 note, R. S.).

⁹ Athelstan quotes Matt. xxv. 26, and writes, or is supposed to write, "Omni habenti dabitur et habundabit;" the next word in the charter is 'perhenniter.' In the *Registrum Abb. Johann. Whethamstede*, i., we

charter attributed to King Athelstan, who being a West Saxon should have known better, but perhaps the insertion was the fault of the scribe; in the *Memorials of S. Dunstan* we have 'abundantia,'¹ but 'habundantem.'² Some derivative of 'abundo' is frequently found in *Thomas of Ely* (for it is the kind of word which from his love of exaggerated statement he is fond of), and it often begins with an 'h';³ and,

have 'habundemus' (p. 271) and 'habundanter' (p. 399).

¹ P. 127, R. S.

² P. 24, R. S.

³ On pp. 177, 179, 185, 190, 201, 243 there is no 'h'; but when the writer describes the way in which Englishmen were supposed to eat in his day,* or the animal life which swarmed in the isle of Ely,† or the amount of booty which his hero Hereward secured,‡ he seems to find the insertion of an 'h' necessary.

It is noticeable that Thomas of Ely (p. 36) in copying the phrase which Bede uses (iii. 27), "in bonis operibus se habundantius exerceret," retains the wrongly inserted 'h'.

* "Cotidie cum monachis in refectorio suo habunde satis more Anglorum vessebar" (p. 232). Much as Geraldus Cambrensis hated monks, he did not, in describing in detail the luxury of a monastic dinner, add an 'h' to 'abunde' (iv. pp. 210, 211).

† "In qua domesticorum animalium habundantia est et ferarum multitudo" (p. 231).

‡ "Prædam habundantem" (p. 239).

when it does so, generally, we think, an emphasis is intended. This feature seems apparent elsewhere than in *Thomas of Ely*; for instance, in the *Eulogy* on Bishop Jocelyn (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 309). Here we have six sentences all beginning with 'sic,' descriptive of the Devil's power. After narrating what the Devil does during a man's lifetime, the writer seems to wish to denote that a climax is reached at the hour of death; he therefore uses the word 'triumphare,' and, as if to accentuate the emphasis, he aspirates it in the only way in which he can, that is, he inserts an 'h' between the first and the second syllable.¹

We very frequently meet in Mediæval Latin with the forms 'hii' and 'hiis'; they are found in most authors, perhaps intentionally on the part of the authors, perhaps through the mistake of the scribe; in no book are they so common as in Jocelyn's *Life of S. Kentigern*.² In what light are we

¹ "Sic in nostra dissolucione trihumphat hostis publici consiliosa calliditas" (*Life of S. Kentigern*, p. 309).

² 'Hii' on pp. 165, 193, 230. 'Hiis' on pp. 160, 161, 162, 163, 176, 177, 187, 193, 205, 208, 209, 214 (thrice), 217, 220 (twice), 221, 229, 232, 237, 239. 'Hi,' not 'hii,' in *Ger. Cambr. De Instit. Principum*, p. 126, but 'hiis,' p. 172. 'Hiis' (*Chron. de Bello*, p. 12). In *S.*

to regard them? Are we to suppose that they are 'ii' and 'iis' with the aspirate added, or are they intended to stand for 'hi' and 'his,' being perhaps written thus in order to show that the 'i' is long? In favour of the first assumption this may be said—that the editor of Smith's *Latin-English Dictionary* states under 'is' that 'hi' and 'his' are common for 'ii' and 'iis' and refers us to Cæsar, *B. G.*, i. 39¹ and ii. 4.² Again, Bede, on one occasion at least, confuses 'iis' with 'his'; for he writes 'de hisdem,'³ and there can be no doubt that he

Dunstan's Memorials we have 'hiis' (twice), p. 71; 'hii,' pp. 76, 78, 111; 'hiis,' 'iis,' p. 89; 'his,' p. 84. 'Hii' (*Fordoun*, p. 11); 'hiis' (*Ibid.*, p. 15). 'Hiis' (*Thomas of Walsingham*, i. pp. 10, 29).

¹ If, however, we refer to the chapter, we shall see that there is a distinct difference in meaning between 'hi' (the young soldiers) and 'ii' (the veterans). We should be inclined therefore to say that here at least 'hi' does not stand for 'ii.'

² We do not know whether Smith supposes that 'hos' stands for 'eos' as well as 'his' for 'iis'; but the difference between 'hos' and 'eos' is here most distinct; thus, "plurimum inter eos (the Belgæ) Bellovocos . . . valere, hos (the Bellovoci) posse conficere. . . ."

³ He is quoting Gregory I. in his answers to Augustin (*Ecc. Hist.*, i. 27). It would be interesting to know whether Gregory himself put on the 'h'. See too "hisdem finibus" (*Ecc. Hist.*, ii. 5).

supposed 'hisdem' to come from 'idem'; for he must have known that there is no word compounded of 'hic' and the demonstrative suffix 'dem.' On the other hand, it is likely that 'hii' and 'hiis' are cases of 'hic'; for we have one passage in which 'hiis' and 'eis,' another form of 'iis,' are contrasted;¹ and there is a passage in Jocelyn's *Life of S. Kentigern* where 'hiis' is connected with 'hec' or 'haec,'² of whose derivation from 'hic' there is no doubt. We have further evidence of "hii" being another form of 'hi' in a couplet well known in the Middle Ages:—

"Ve populo cujus puer est rex, censor agrestis,
Exterus antistes; hii mala multa movent."³

¹ "Prohibeo ne quis eis super hiis molestiam vel impedimentum vel diminutionem faciat" (from Stephen's first Charter, Stubbs' *Documents Illustrative of English History*, p. 113). We have other instances where 'hic' and 'is' are used in juxtaposition, but it is not always certain that they are contrasted: "Hii his contenti" (*Hist. of the Ch. of York*, i. p. 424). "Justum est ut qui omnia subjecit sub pedibus nostris, subjiciamus illi et nos animas nostras; et ut hii, quos nobis subdidit, ejus subdantur legibus" (*Rishanger*, p. 194).

² "Hec et hiis similia multa coram illis dixit" (p. 215).

³ Skeat's *Piers the Plowman*, p. 103.

Here not only has 'hii' the signification of 'hi,' not of 'ii,' but it must be pronounced as 'hi'; for otherwise the verse would not scan. This fact seems to show that the double 'i' was but a trick of mediæval scribes, and that therefore no aspirate was ever wrongly inserted in this case; but it does not touch Bede's expression 'de hisdem';¹ he at least cannot but be convicted of undue aspiration. On the whole, after reviewing the evidence for and against, it may be said that it is very doubtful whether it was a habit of mediæval writers of Latin to aspirate 'is' and thus to cause a confusion between 'is' and 'hic.'²

¹ In the *Memorials of S. Dunstan* we have 'hisdem' (p. 15), and on p. 39 'isdem' in one manuscript and 'hisdem' in another, and 'ex hisdem' on p. 93.

² In the following passages 'hiis' and 'his' are from 'hic':—"Haec et hiis similia" (*Memorials of S. Dunstan*, p. 22); "Haec et his similia" (*ibid.*, p. 30); "Haec et his similia" (*ibid.*, p. 46); "Haec et hiis similibus" (*Thomas of Walsingham*, i. p. 329); "Hiis et hiis similibus" (*ibid.*, i. p. 395); "Nunc hiis nunc illis praevalentibus" (*ibid.*, i. p. 33); "Ab eis qui hiis omnibus interfuere didicimus" (*ibid.*, i. p. 427). On the other hand in "hii et eorum complices" (*Thomas of Walsingham*, ii. p. 256) 'hii' seems to stand for 'ii,' for it refers to 'eorum.' There is a passage in the *Dialogus de Scaccario* where 'heae' must be in the place of 'hae,' not of 'cae'; for it is 'hic,' not 'is,' which is contrasted with 'ille'; "Illa illustrant, heae sub-

Nevertheless, if they had confused the two words, it would not have been wonderful ; for in English 'this' and 'that' are closely connected ; 'those,' the present plural of 'that,' is in reality the plural of 'this,' which handed over to 'that' its own plural (the proper plural of 'that' being in Saxon 'tha' and in early English 'tho') and took to itself an alternative form of 'those'—namely, 'these.'¹ It was not long ago that 'those' was used in dialect in the sense of 'these.'²

It seems a pity that Mr. Ellis in his *English Dialects* did not devote his attention to the treatment of the 'h' in England. He shows us in his map, and on pp. 6, 7 and 8, how certain vowels are pronounced in different parts of England ; and it is easy to see that the distinction between the different sounds is to a great extent racial. Could not Mr. Ellis have performed the same service for 'h' ? We believe that he could. The

veniunt" (Stubbs' *Documents Illustrative of English History*, p. 160). 'Heae' occurs also again in the *Dialogus de Scaccario* (Stubbs' *Documents*, p. 213) ; 'hiis' is distinguished from 'eis' on p. 163 ; "ut de hiis compotus ab eis exigatur."

¹ Earle's *Philology of the English Tongue*, 5th ed., p. 478.

² *Ibid.*, p. 479.

task could at least be accomplished by one who had sufficient time and patience and the requisite knowledge. For what is the state of matters in the English-speaking part of Britain with reference to the pronunciation of 'h'? We see districts where it is never improperly either put on or thrown aside,¹ others where it is never used under any circumstances, others where it is dropped but never put on,² and others again where it is both

¹ "H is in Scotch very strongly pronounced, 'almost with somewhat of guttural effect. The abuse of 'h,' by dropping it where it exists and intercalating it where it has no existence, is unknown in Scotch. It remains in 'hyt' or 'it,' which is the Anglo-Saxon 'hyt'; and the Old English 'hus' or 'us' appears as 'huz,' the only word which has taken a prosthetic h" (Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 120). 'Huz' is perhaps the only Scotch word which aspirates an originally simple vowel; and this is not a modern corruption like the cockney 'hair of the hatmosphere,' but an ancient form: compare the Paternoster of the thirteenth century given by Mr. Ellis (*Early English Pron.*, p. 442):—

'Ure bred that lastes ai
Give it hus hilke dai,
And ure misdedis thu forgive hus
Als we forgive thaim that misdon hus'

(Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 188.)

² We have described Wessex as a part of England in which h's are dropped but not added. The people of

put on and taken off ; and if we consult a map of England under the Heptarchy we shall see that these districts are to a great extent the same as some of the early English kingdoms. If this is indeed the case the inference is irresistible that the reason why 'h' does not receive the same treatment in all parts of England is an historical one.

A Scotsman is sometimes unfairly accused of dropping an 'h' ; thus, he pronounces 'Helen' as 'Elen,' because he has taken the word from the French ; on his lips, therefore, there is no difference in sound

Wessex do, however, know the use and value of an 'h' (this cannot be said of the people living in some parts of England) and use it occasionally. If there lives a man in a Wessex village of the name of Harris he goes of course among his neighbours by the name of 'Mr. 'Arris' ; for it would be too troublesome to be continually using the aspirate. But they do not imitate the dwellers in and around London in making no distinction between 'I hain't' and 'I ain't.' The latter expression, which is a vulgar corruption of 'I am not,' and which (strange to say) is used by many educated persons, is also used for 'I haven't,' or, as cockneys and some others would say, 'I 'aven't.' But it is never so used in Wessex. The inhabitants of this district have, indeed, within the last twenty or thirty years, dropped the good West Saxon 'I bean't' or 'I bain't,' but when they wish to imply that they do not possess a thing, their expression is 'I hain't' or 'I han't,' not 'I ain't.' It is strange that

between 'Elen' and 'Ellen'; consequently the town of Helensburgh has a mute 'h' as its initial letter. Mrs. Oliphant, a Scots-woman herself, even accuses him, though, as has been pointed out, unfairly, of adding an 'h':

" 'Is that hit?' said Katrin. It is seldom, very seldom, that a Scotch speaker makes any havoc with the letter 'h,' but there is an occasional exception to this rule for the sake of emphasis. 'Is that hit?' is a stronger expression than 'Is that it?' It isolates the pronoun and gives it force" (*Sir Robert's Fortune*, p. 90).

But it has to be admitted that the 'ain't' should have made its way so extensively among the educated; its prevalence shows how completely Modern English is a Midland dialect. In the various subdialects of the Midlands 'ain't' is short for 'am not,' and is also used for 'is not' and 'are not.' Educated people who adopt 'ain't' might perhaps fairly plead that 'I am not' is too long, and that 'I amn't' is too difficult of pronunciation (though the educated in Scotland and Ireland do not find it so), but surely there is nothing to be objected against 'I'm not.' 'I ain't,' is not, however, so frequently used among the educated as 'you ain't' and 'they aint.' There is some excuse for 'I ain't'; for, as we have said, it is a corruption of 'I'm not,' and the corruption takes place by the working of a grammatical rule well known in Gaelic, the change of 'm' into 'v' by aspiration, and the subsequent elision of

'h' of 'hym,' 'hyr,' and 'hyt' is not heard when unemphatic ;¹ and 'they,' 'them,' 'there,' 'that' in the Caithness dialect are 'ee,' 'em,' 'eer,' 'at.'² In consequence of the accurate treatment of the 'h' in the Scottish speech the derivation of the name of the town of Haddington from Ada, who married the son of David I. and owned Haddington, although asserted by Miller in his *History of Haddington* (p. 11. note), is most unlikely. In addition to this, it could probably be shown that the form 'Haddington' is much older than the time of Ada. It is true that the 'v'; but there is no excuse for 'they ain't' and 'you ain't'; for it is quite as easy to say 'they aren't' and 'you aren't'; and yet, strange to say, 'they ain't' and 'you ain't' are more frequently used than 'I ain't.' There is one expression which at present the vulgar only use but which the next generation of educated persons may adopt—'he ain't.' Is it the case that 'ain't' is preferred to 'aren't' because the English dislike the use of the 'r'? It is said that men dislike those whom they have injured. The English have slurred the 'r' to such a degree that it is little more than the broad 'a'; they have in many instances converted the broad 'a' into a flat 'a'—for example, in *tassel* and *ass*—while in such words as *master* and *pass* the flat *a* is frequently used; do they object to the attenuated 'r' which exists in 'aren't'? We know that in some dialects this letter is rejected in 'Dorset' and 'parson.'

¹ Murray's *Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 189.

² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

William of Rishanger¹ makes Wallace prefix an 'h' to the pronoun 'I' in his address to the Scots before the battle of Falkirk: "Hy have pult (or put) ou into a gamen," Wallace is supposed to have said, "hoppet gif ye kunnet;" but we must remember that it is an Englishman that writes down Wallace's words. For long after Scotch had ceased to be spoken in the corps of Scots Guards in France there remained the custom of answering 'hamir' (a corruption of 'I am here') when the roll was called, which was religiously maintained at all events down to the Revolution.² But we must remember that 'hamir' is not a Scottish expression, but the corruption of one. Of one thing we may be certain that no Scotsman ever said 'ir' or 'ere' for 'here'; those who know Scotland are aware how strongly and roughly the 'h' is even now pronounced in 'here'; if it is so now, it could hardly have been otherwise a few centuries ago. The existence of the 'h' is probably accounted for by the 'ch' which once formed part of the pronoun of the first person singular; or, on the principle of compensation, the 'h,'

¹ P. 385.

² *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1896, p. 388.

when taken off the 'here,' has been prefixed to the 'am.'

The following historical fact affords a very good instance of the way in which men may fall unjustly under the accusation of dropping h's: Roger Kynaston of Hordley slew James Touchet, Lord Audley, at the battle of Blore Heath in 1449, and his descendants have ever since added the arms of Audley to their own as a token of their ancestor's achievement.¹ If we were not aware of this incident, how natural would it be to suppose that the reason why the Kynastons bore the Audley arms was that, thinking there was no difference between 'Hordley' and 'Audley' (there is none now in pronunciation except in the matter of the 'h'), they claimed to be a branch of the Audley family! We may say that there is hardly any difference in sound between 'Hordley' and 'Audley,' and we may think that they could be easily confused. We must, however, remember that in 1449, and for some time after, the 'r' in Hordley was probably rolled. Still, it is possible that they might have been confused at the time of the Wars of the Roses, and they certainly would be now confused among the

¹ *The Feudal Barons of Powys*, p. 83.

illiterate classes. Among educated persons the omission of the 'h' sometimes makes the word unrecognisable ; thus, when the sub-organist of a cathedral presented his small son to the bishop of the diocese with the words, "We call him 'Andel, my lord," the bishop replied, "'Andel! What a strange name!" "Have you never heard, my lord, of 'Andel's 'Messiah'?" said the sub-organist. The bishop was in reality a very musical man, but no one could induce the sub-organist to believe so after this. The following is another example of the way in which the identity of a word is concealed by the dropping of an 'h': In an interview between the editor and sub-editor of a Church paper this conversation occurred when the paper was going to press :—Editor : "I hope that everything is right." In answer to this the sub-editor said something indistinctly about Home missions ; only he left out the 'h' of 'Home,' and so the editor misunderstood him. Editor (severely): "This is rather late in the day for omissions." Sub-editor (contemptuously, as if the editor was either deaf or ignorant of educated English): "I didn't say 'omissions'; I said 'Ome missions.'"

The following story is a true one and will be recognised by the clergy of at least one English diocese, but it has never been ascertained whether the confusion between 'ants' and 'Hants' was feigned or real: A clergyman once wished to take a living in Hampshire; but before he made up his mind he thought he would consult a brother clergyman who, he believed, knew something of the county. So he called on him, and this is how he opened the conversation: "Do you know anything about 'Ants?'" The other, to whom the inquirer was known as a hard-working clergyman, but not as a man of attainments or of studious habits, and possibly, too, as a man who dropped his h's, replied, "I did not know that you studied entomology."

It is impossible to be always certain whether the identity of a word is concealed or not by the dropping or adding of an 'h,' for so much depends upon the context, or upon the circumstances under which the word is used, or upon the amount of education possessed by the speaker or by the person spoken to. Let us suppose that a lady enters a music shop and asks for a piece of music which the shopman does not know;

he suggests that the lady should 'um the hair, and is not misunderstood. An inquirer once asked whether Mr. So-and-So had left any hair or any heir behind him ; but the context only could decide what he meant. A local preacher is describing the Ten Plagues and the immunity which the land of Goshen enjoyed, remarked that there was no 'ail there. Most persons would have not had the slightest doubt as to his meaning ; but those who know the English farm-labourer are aware that very possibly the congregation so addressed were pitying the land in which there was no ale.

Sometimes English people only pretend to be misled as to the meaning of a speaker by the dropping of an 'h,' although the person addressed may not always perceive the sarcasm. One day a member of a class of working men, in reading aloud the account of the battle of Bunker's Hill, pronounced it " Bunker's 'ill." " What ! " said the teacher, ' is Bunker ill ? Poor fellow ! What is the matter with him ? " There are times when an Englishman intentionally misplaces an 'h' in order to excite ridicule. The following story which illustrates this habit is taken from the *Daily News* of January 26, 1895 :

“Great admiration has been expressed for a sharp retort uttered by the late Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir William Harcourt. Lord Randolph having in 1886 accused the Liberal Government, in very strong language, of playing tricks upon the House of Commons, Sir William remarked that it was Derby Day, and that the noble lord was using the language of the Derby. ‘Not the Derby,’ said Lord Randolph, ‘the Hoaks.’ If Lord Randolph made this joke it was nearly twenty years old when he made it. Mr. Disraeli, on succeeding Lord Derby as Prime Minister in 1868, removed Lord Chelmsford from the woolsack, and appointed Lord Cairns in his stead. Lord Chelmsford was extremely indignant, complaining that he had not had even the month’s warning to which a cook was entitled, and sought revenge in an epigram. ‘The late Government,’ he said, ‘was the Derby; this is the *hoax*.’”

It is almost invariably an Englishman, not an Irishman or a Scot, that plays thus with words; for with neither of the two latter is the dropping of the ‘h’ important, as neither ever drops one; but an Irishman, and he not apparently one of the English or Scottish garrison but an Irish Celt, once did so, as

we find from the *Historical Record of the 6th or Irish Inniskilling Dragoons*, p. 38 : "In 1691 Sir Albert Cunningham, commander of the Inniskilling Dragoons, was taken prisoner and killed by an Irish sergeant with a spear with these words, 'Albert is your name and by a halbert you shall die.'"

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction : thus, if we wished to write a novel, and if in this novel one of the characters was to be a hairdresser, what more appropriate name could we find for him than Ayres, which he himself would probably pronounce as Hayres? And yet there is now living a hairdresser of this name in an English country town. We have known a successful and enthusiastic cricketer whose surname was De la Bat ; naturally his strong point was batting.

An 'h' is not only intentionally added or dropped at times by a speaker in order to excite laughter, but the unintentional dropping or adding of one will sometimes arouse contempt and ridicule on the part of the hearers. A clergyman who was taking part in a Mission or who was preaching an Advent sermon, wishing to impress very strongly upon his hearers the suddenness of our Lord's Second Coming and also the

possibility of its being close at hand, made a long pause, threw himself into an attitude which implied that he was listening for a distant sound, and then said in his most solemn manner, "'Ush"! but the effect was not what he wished it to be; the dropping of the aspirate completely spoilt what would otherwise have been a very impressive act. The congregation, we may be perfectly certain, smiled.

Sometimes the adding of the aspirate causes the hearer totally to misunderstand the speaker's meaning. Once upon a time a clergyman on going into the vestry saw a new choir-boy. He asked him his name and he thought that the boy replied 'Harbrooks.' Shortly after another choir-boy said to the clergyman, 'Please, sir, Brooks hasn't had a cassock given to him yet.' "Is that the new boy?" said the clergyman, and on being answered in the affirmative he turned to the new-comer and said, "Did not you tell me that your name was Harbrooks?" "Yes, sir, I did," replied the boy, "HaR. Brooks, sir—Reginald Brooks." At other times the misplacement of an 'h' will occasion no misunderstanding, but merely a momentary start at the strangeness of the sound. "How

have things been getting on while I have been away?" said a clergyman to his organist on his return from his holidays. "Very well indeed," replied the organist; "there 'asn't been an 'itch all the time that you have been away." It happened once that a clergyman, on entering his schoolroom, found his schoolmistress giving a lesson on our Lord's Temptation. At the moment of his entrance the point which she was explaining was Christ's Impeccability, and this is how she did it: "'E,' she said, with reference to Satan, 'couldn't get no 'old on 'Im.' After all, there was no reason for a start of surprise; for this way of explaining Christian doctrines is and was common enough in England: the Franciscan friar of the thirteenth century spoke in this fashion, and it is still the style of the local preacher.

Again, there are times when the misapprehension takes place indeed, but is immediately dispelled: "How are you getting on?" said a clergyman to a brother priest who was making alterations in his church, and who had the reputation of being a lover of a good dinner. "Oh, very well indeed," was the reply; "we have just been putting in an 'eating apparatus." It was

known that he celebrated fasting, and it was believed that at the end of a celebration he always found a chop ready for him in the vestry ; and so the thought, although it was only a momentary one, came into the inquirer's head that his friend had introduced into the vestry some new contrivance to facilitate either mastication or swallowing. " Good gracious ! " he murmured to himself, " is it indeed come to this ? You old glutton, you are not content with the powers of eating which God has given you, but must needs improve on them " ; but, quickly suppressing his surprise and grasping the situation, he made some sympathetic and commonplace remark, and then passed on to some other topic of conversation. There are times, however, when it is difficult to distinguish between ' eating ' and the unaspirated form of ' heating . ' For example, if a man, congratulated on his recovery from illness, replied, " Thank you ; the doctor says I shall do now very well ; but I must take care not to ' eat myself , " the dropping of the ' h ' would be no impediment to the clear understanding of his meaning. But let us suppose that the convalescent said that the doctor had warned him against either over-

eating or overheating himself ; if he did not use the aspirate ambiguity would arise, and in the elucidation of it the social position of the sick man and his personal habits would have to be taken into account. We add another example of the confusion between 'eating' and 'heating':—

There was once tried in an English law-court a Patent case which turned upon the method of manufacturing "a chemical product."

The judge was notorious for his frequent contempt of the letter 'h'. The plaintiff was a Frenchman, and his counsel (aided by an interpreter, also a Frenchman) had at last succeeded in making his Lordship understand the process.

"I think," said the judge, "I understand it now. First you procure a solution of potassium hydrate, then you add hydrochloric acid, and then you 'eat it.'"

The interpreter, bound by oath to translate literally all he heard, turning to his client, remarked—

"Le juge dit :

'Je pense que maintenant je comprends le procès. Premièrement vous procurez de potassium hydrate en solution, alors vous y

ajoutez d'acide hydrochlorique, et alors vous le mangez.'"

"Oh, non—mon Dieu, non!" cried the plaintiff; "on ne le mange pas. C'est un poison terrible."

Whereupon the poor interpreter, unable to bear such a reflection upon his translation, turned to the judge and said respectfully, "My Lord, I chuck."

It is, then, the literal truth that it is often impossible in England to get at the truth of a matter when it is a question whether an aspirate should be used or not. On one occasion a clergyman who was about to christen a baby asked its name before the service, in order that there should be no mistake. "What are you going to name the child?" he said to the mother. "Olly, sir," she replied. Thinking this a peculiar name, and hoping to make the point quite certain, he turned to the father, and asked what the child's name was to be. "Holly, sir," said the father. It was a hopeless matter to question the parents any further; for probably the mother would soon be saying that the child was to be called 'Holly,' and the father would be just as certain that its proper name was 'Olly'; and both would be igno-

rant that they had made any change in pronunciation ; and so the clergyman left the matter to chance and baptized the child ' Olly,' and entered the name as such in the register-book. He afterwards found out that he was right ; for ' Olly ' was meant to be the shortened form of ' Oliver.' But the name intended might easily have been ' Holly ' ; for girls are frequently called Violet and Daisy, and we have baptized a child under the name of Ivy. An instance of the impossibility of arriving at any solution under such circumstances has been vouched for as having actually occurred some time ago in a low part of Chatham. There had been a disturbance in a public-house in which some soldiers were implicated ; but it was doubtful where the disturbance had taken place ; for there were two public-houses in the same street of nearly similar names, the ' Arrow ' and the ' Harrow.' There was no doubt that in one of the two the disorder had occurred, but it was found impossible to be certain ; for the offending inn was referred to by the witnesses under both names. If all the soldiers implicated had belonged to one regiment, and if that regiment had been actually, as well as in name, a territorial

regiment, the difficulty would have been considerably lessened ; if they had been all men of the Wiltshire Regiment or of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the question as to the site of the public-house would have caused comparatively little trouble ; for Northumbrians do not misplace their *h*'s, and Wiltshire men, although they may drop them through laziness, carelessness, or ignorance, could always tell the difference between an 'arrow' and an 'harrow.' But the soldiers who had taken part in the disturbance happened to be men of the Royal Engineers, and the Engineers are recruited from all parts of the kingdom ; one man will be a Scot, that is, a man who never drops an 'h' or puts one on ; the next man to him may come from Shropshire, where the 'h' is unknown ; the third man is perhaps a cockney, who throws his *h*'s about in the wildest fashion. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that at the investigation things came to such a pass that it was likely that the case could not be proceeded with. At last the officer who presided over the court-martial, driven to despair, turned to the sergeant-major and said to him, "Now, sergeant-major, can you not help us out of

the difficulty? Was the inn the 'Arrow' or the 'Harrow'?" "Well, sir," was the reply, "to tell you the truth, it was the 'Arrow' with the *haitch*." The difficulty was at once solved.

But it never could have arisen in Scotland. In a small village not far from Edinburgh there live, or there lived a short time ago, two ministers, one of the Established and the other of the Free Church, one named Ogg and the other Hogg. It may be difficult, at least to southerners, to understand the difference in doctrine between the two Churches, but there is, or there was, no difficulty whatever in this Scottish village in distinguishing the two ministers; for Scotsmen never drop their *h*'s. But let us imagine such a state of things existing in any part of England outside Wessex and the northern counties. It would be bad enough even within these districts (for the misuse of 'h' is by no means unknown even in them), but outside of them it would be simply intolerable. We will suppose that in some English village the vicar's name is Hogg and the Wesleyan minister's Ogg. We are not going beyond the bare fact when we say that when either of the two was named in

conversation the hearers would never know which of the two was referred to. The inhabitants of the parish would be driven, even against their will, to make use of epithets which would probably refer either to character or to personal appearance ; and it is likely that the epithets would not be complimentary. Notwithstanding, however, the difference in sound and meaning between 'Hogg' and 'Ogg,' they are probably the same word. 'Ogg' is undoubtedly 'og,' the Gaelic for 'young,' and corresponds to the English surname 'Young.' Our readers may remember that one of the sons of Rob Roy was called 'Seumas og,' or 'young James.' 'Hogg' is from the Lowland Scottish word 'hogg,' which sometimes means a wether, sometimes a young sheep less than a year old. Skeat in his *Concise Etymological Dictionary* and Jamieson in his *Scottish Dictionary* would derive it from the original of 'to hack' ; but it could also come, and we think does come, from the Gaelic 'og.' If the latter is the correct derivation, then 'hogg' is properly a young sheep and only secondarily a wether ; and the Angles, when they introduced the word into their own language from the language of their

Gaelic shepherds,¹ added an 'h'; or we may put it in this way—it became 'hog' instead of 'og' in Northern English because, owing to the Gaelic law of euphony and the Gaelic rule about the feminine gender and the Gaelic fashion of marking the genitive, the word that the Angles actually heard was oftener 'hog' than 'og.' Or the following may be the true explanation: 'hogyn' is the Welsh for a boy; it can hardly fail to be connected with 'og,' the Gaelic for 'young,' and it is possible that it is through the initial 'h' in it that the Northumbrians and Lowland Scots say 'hogg' and not 'og.'² We

¹ The names of the serfs of the Lowland Scotland of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which have been handed down to us show how thoroughly Gaelic the lowest class was; we meet with Gillandrear M'Suthen, Gillecostentin, Bredinlamb, Gillesefmac, Gillecolmmacmelg, Beth MacLood, Gillepatric Macmanethin, Allan Gilgrewer (Fraser-Tytler's *Hist. of Scot.*, ii. pp. 156, 157, 158, Edinburgh, 1845). All these names belong to serfs who were connected with the lands of the abbey of Dunfermline, and who may therefore be said to have lived in the heart of Lowland Scotland. It is morally certain that their tongue was as Gaelic as their names. During the same period the names of the majority of the upper classes in the Lowlands were Norman-French (see Fraser-Tytler's *Hist. of Scot.*, i. pp. 463, 473).

² We have called the shepherds of the Angles who founded the kingdom of Northumberland Gaelic, but a

must, however, be constantly on our guard against the supposition that similar words of similar meaning must be connected. Who would have doubted the connection between 'sorry' and 'sorrow'? And yet Sheat tells us in his *Concise Etymological Dictionary* that they have nothing whatever to do with each other. Any one would have supposed

large number of them must have been British. Between the Grampians and the Cheviots there were the Southern Picts, who were Gaels, although Skene supposes a British element in the composition of the nation, the Picts of the Pentlands and the Picts of Galloway; there are also other portions of the Lowlands which retain evidently Gaelic names in their topography; thus a small village in East Lothian named Garvald, with a brawling brook running through it, is clearly 'garbh allt,' the present Gaelic for a 'rough burn.' On the other hand we have the British kingdom of Fortrenn, which is a portion of Perthshire; the Britons of a district called Manann, which has been perpetuated either in Clackmannan on the north side of the Forth, or in Slamannan on its south side, or in Presmennan, the name of a farm-steading in East Lothian; the Britons of Teviotdale, and the Britons of Strathclyde. To the south of the Cheviots the Celtic population was probably entirely British; there is, at least, no evidence that it was in any degree or in any districts Gaelic, although, if in Wales, according to Professor Rhys, Gaels were conquered and absorbed by Britons, it is likely that the same process was carried out in the country that afterwards became the North of England.

that 'the ear' and 'to hear' were derived from the same root, the aspirate having been improperly dropped or added; but Skeat in the same dictionary tells us that they have no connection whatever, although 'ear' is the same word as the Latin 'auris' and is akin to 'audio.' There are two Greek words very similar in sound, in appearance, and in meaning, one with an aspirate and the other without, which are yet, perhaps, totally unconnected—*αἶρω*, I take up, and *αἶρω*, I take away. 'What's a canard, father?' said a boy once after reading the Latest Intelligence in a daily paper. The father, who was not accustomed to such questions, but who perhaps in a weak moment had encouraged his son to be inquisitive, paused for a moment, and then gave his son an explanation which he considered both correct, concise, and intelligible to a youthful mind: "It is not exactly a lie," he replied, "but it is something which you *can 'ardly* believe." That the derivation was etymologically right he did not doubt for an instant; for the similarity in sound between 'canard' and 'can 'ardly' put it in his opinion beyond a doubt that they were of the same origin.

A Scotsman is not so quick in detecting

the dropping of an 'h' as a properly educated Englishman; for he is not suspicious on this point, whereas the ear of the latter has been trained for this purpose. While an Englishman will say there is nothing so detestable as the dropping of an 'h' except it be the addition of one, it is not unlikely that a Scotsman will say (what he has been known to say) that what offends him most is the placing of an 'r' after a broad 'a'; thus, some clergymen used to say when reading the Church prayers, "Victoria *r*our Queen." In the same way a cockney, speaking of a young woman named Amelia Ann, will term her 'Hamelia *r*Ann.'¹ This interposition of the slurred 'r' is to a Scot² very unpleasant; for a Scot cannot pronounce a slurred 'r' even in its proper place; thus the correct English pronunciation of 'chariot' cannot be given in Scotland; the word acts like 'shibboleth' to all Scotsmen, except to

¹ This, we believe, was the name given fifty years ago to the type of young woman whom now, from her being the companion of 'Arry, we call 'Arriet.

² Highlanders, who are sometimes but not always willing to be termed Scots, insert an 'r' in the plural of 'righ' a king. The word, which to an English ear is pronounced 'ree,' would naturally have as its plural 'righcan,' but it is 'righrean' (Matt. xvii. 25.).

those who have been educated in England and who therefore, from a linguistic point of view, are not Scotsmen at all.

We have now brought to a close our review of the use of the letter 'H' in our own tongue and in several languages which have in one way or another had something to do with English. We admit that the review is an imperfect one; but it can hardly be uninteresting to English-speaking people, whether the aspirate be regarded from an historical, a philological, or a social point of view; for in days gone by it divided province from province, and even now to a certain extent divides county from county; and for, perhaps, the last two centuries it has socially separated England into two parts by a barrier which is almost insurmountable.

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